

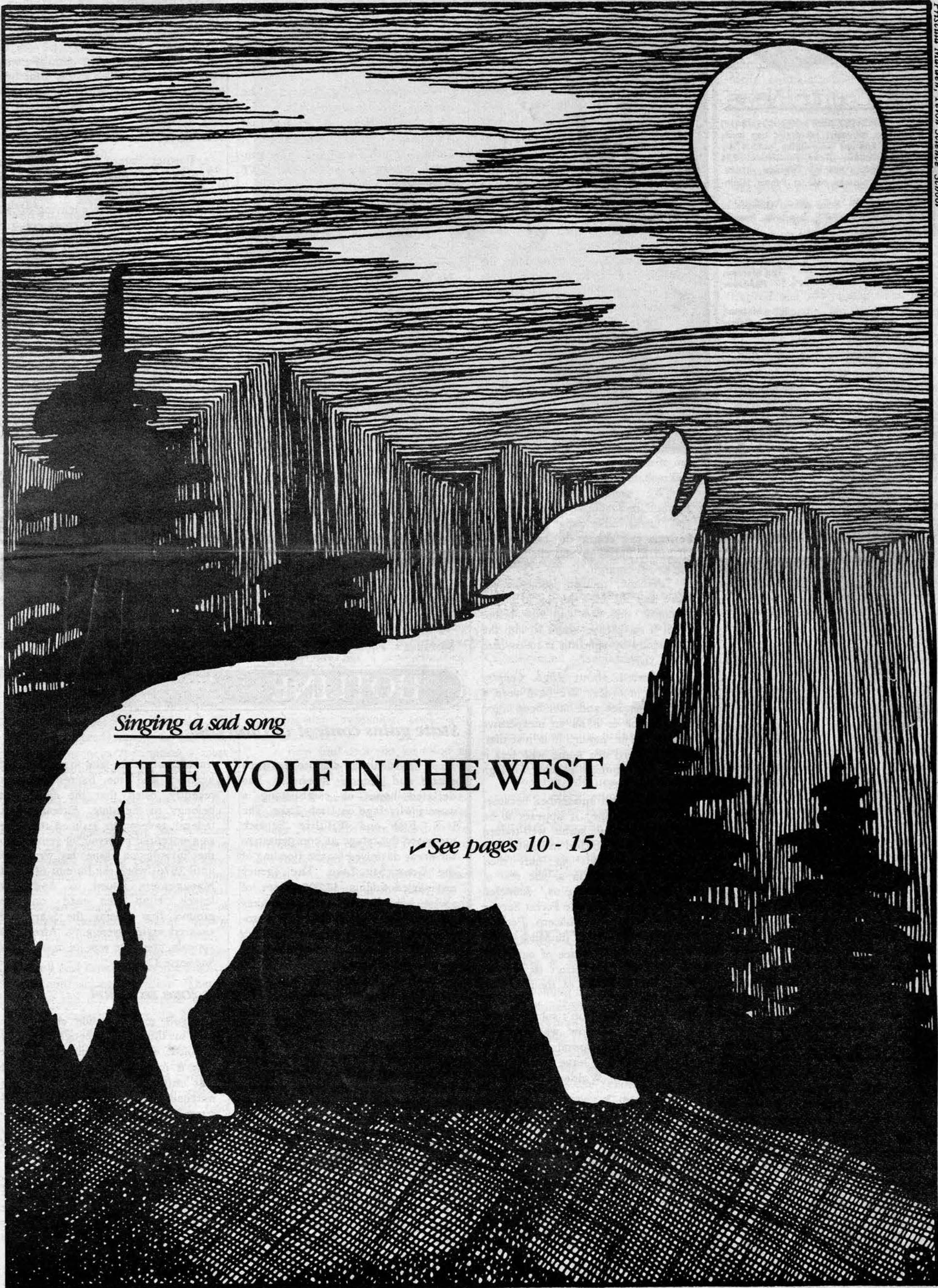
High Country News

November 23, 1987

Vol. 19 No. 22

A Paper for People who Care about the West

One Dollar



Singing a sad song

THE WOLF IN THE WEST

✓ See pages 10 - 15

2-High Country News -- November 23, 1987

Dear friends,



High Country News

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A spear

The *Columbia Journalism Review*, now a tightly-written, close-to-the-presses publication, has a "darts and laurels" section in which it critiques media that fall its way. Since *CJR* hasn't paid us any mind, we have taken over the idea on our own behalf:

An especially large dart, more like a spear, goes to Ed Marston for his Sept. 14 Dear Friends reference to the town of Walden, in northernmost Colorado. The very small town hopes its choice as Christmas tree supplier to the White House in 1990 will put it on the map, and help its ailing economy. The aspiration was mocked here with a reference to Lana Turner sitting on a stool at Schwab's.

The Jackson County *Star*, Walden's weekly, read the column and reacted in its Oct. 29 issue under the headline: "Pooh to Paonia - here's mud in your eye!" Their editorial comment follows:

"The following editorial comment came from a recent issue of the Paonia *High Country News*. It was sent to the *Star* by Barbara Ware's daughter from Seattle. How or why a newspaper from a tiny town out east of Delta and Hotchkiss, whose only real claim to fame is its annual mudslide, would need to make nasty fun of us is beyond us, but they did, and took delight in doing it.

"We wonder what the most appropriate response to this jealous and uncharitable dig should be. Perhaps just doing the best job we all can in handling the challenge of the tree is enough.

"Perhaps, though, someone out there has an idea as to a proper response, one we can fire before 1990. If so, please share it with the community by sending it to us here at the *Star*.

"A word about *High Country News* is in order. We have seen a couple of issues and have been urged to subscribe to it as an inexpensive and well-done paper. It is just that. Indeed, there are some who feel it should be required reading for high school students!

"We haven't subscribed because, though well done, it appears to be put together by some well-trained folks who have settled in Paonia as a base from which to hurl their environmental barbs at the rest of the world. 'They hate us,' muttered a representative of the Forest Service without a trace of concern. Perhaps being based on a mudslide gives them some appearance of authenticity for their lofty effort to foist on society the sanctity of their view of the truth.

"Anyway, we don't subscribe and would love to know what you all think of how to respond. It really is a nasty swipe they have taken at the good people of Walden and Jackson County."

The above was followed by a reprint of the five paragraphs on Walden. It would have been OK, properly representing this paper's conviction that small Western towns wear themselves out doing inappropriate, and very often self-defeating, economic development. But we said at the end that their Christmas tree hopes were "both pathetic and amusing." That was mean and uncalled for.

The Leader



Ed Easton

Thanks

Our thanks to Ed Easton of the National Wildlife Federation for his review of *HCN* in the October 1987 *NWF Leader* under the headline "A Tabloid Worth Emulating. His generous column has led several NWF members to subscribe.

Circulation drive

Subscribers in Helena, Mont., may have noticed over the past several months that they were seeing *HCN* everywhere: in fast food outlets, newsstands, doctor's offices. The ubiquity was a result of an experiment by Helena board member John Driscoll. Board members are helpful to the paper in a variety of ways, and John has chosen circulation as his area. Rather than theorize on the subject, he went out into the streets, signing up newsdealers, leaving papers at MacDonald's, and the like.

As a result of his efforts, he's found that "it takes an hour to locate, discuss, and initiate the program in five stores, newsstands, malt shops, or whatever." After getting the proprietor to stock the paper, it takes a half hour every other week to distribute the papers. A key part of the distribution, he says, is ensuring that *HCN* isn't buried under other periodicals.

John, an elected member of Montana's Public Service Commis-

sion when he is not running his *HCN* paper route, has thus far found three stores where it makes sense to stock the paper: Main News, Rodney News and Last Chance Surplus. Now that John has made the initial contacts, the stores will be supplied and billed out of Paonia. His efforts have resulted thus far in a 15 percent increase in our Helena circulation at a cost below that of direct mail.

Speaking of newsstands, we are also now on sale at Johnny's Newsstand at 15th and Champa in downtown Denver. The initiative was Johnny's, who called to say that two customers in one day had requested *HCN*.

Crickets, et al

Former intern Dan Cohen, a denizen of East 4th Street in Manhattan, says he has been out of touch with nature since leaving *HCN*. But recently he took a cross country trip: "I heard crickets. I saw crabgrass. The whole bit." With that out the way for the next year or so, he returned to his real life of reading scripts, performing and working as a volunteer to teach adults to read.

Queasy

High Country News has had an environmental problem of its own the past several weeks. As mentioned, we've expanded into the office next door. After mass mailing was completed, we had the office painted, and then we waited, and waited, and waited for the smell to go away. It has now been more than two weeks, and yet people who work in that office all day still get queasy by the end of the day. We have called Pittsburgh Paint, and they have been concerned, and are investigating the batch of paint used, but as yet the office remains uninhabitable.

--the staff

HOTLINE

State gains control of Utah Lake

A jurisdictional dispute between state and federal agencies has deflated hopes of establishing a waterfowl refuge on Utah Lake. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service proposed the refuge as compensation for areas destroyed by the flooding of the Great Salt Lake. The agency envisioned adding 34,000 acres of shore habitat to the 16,500 acres already owned by the federal government to create a sanctuary. The Fish and Wildlife Service's environmental assessment, however, proposed the

transfer of public land to the federal agency, and the Supreme Court recently ruled that the lake bed belongs to the state. Although the federal government claimed the lake as a potential reservoir 99 years ago, the jurisdiction issue lay dormant until 1976, when the Bureau of Land Management issued oil and gas leases. Utah then sued on the ground that leasing the lake bed violated state sovereignty. After two appeals, the state won its case in the Supreme Court.

New Mexico environmentalists lose in court

A Santa Fe judge turned back New Mexico environmentalists' challenge to the state Game and Fish Commission's policy on trapping mountain lions near Carlsbad Canyon. District Judge Bruce Kaufman ruled Oct. 15 that the commission acted legally when it voted to expand lion trapping to protect sheep that graze outside Carlsbad. Joined by the *Albuquerque Tribune*, environmentalists had charged that four of the commission's five members violated New Mexico's Open Meetings Act. In early May, those members toured the Guadalupe Mountains surrounding Carlsbad Canyon National Park with ranchers who sought

enlarged mountain lion control efforts by the state. Although they lost in court, environmentalists said they sent a message to the commission that future lion policy will be watched closely. But for now, said attorney Susan Tixier, who represented the environmentalists, "They can go ahead and hold a meeting any time they want to."

In addition to ruling that members had not violated the law, the judge rejected Tixier's request that he order the commission to adopt formal administrative procedures for setting wildlife management regulations. Tixier says she will not appeal.

WESTERN ROUNDUP

Utah wants 60,000 acres on Lake Powell

A proposal by Utah Gov. Norm Bangerter to acquire 60,000 acres of federal land within Glen Canyon Recreation Area is being opposed by conservationists and the head of the recreation area. Bangerter wants the land as sites for five new marinas on Lake Powell.

Bangerter says he wants five federal tracts on the shores of Lake Powell and will trade state land to the Park Service. Eager to give Utah an economic boost, Bangerter says the swap will help develop the area in southern Utah.

The superintendent of Glen Canyon Recreation Area disagrees. "If I were to allow uncontrolled access and development of those five proposed marinas, there would be no purpose for the National Park Service to be here," says superintendent John Lancaster. "We need to control access and development to adequately manage the area."

Displeased in turn, Bangerter told the *Deseret News*: "I'm not going to let some low-level bureaucrat tell me what to do in Utah."

Bangerter's proposal received support from Secretary of the Interior Donald Hodel and Sen. Jake Garn, R-Utah. Bangerter and Hodel recently signed a memorandum of understanding regarding land exchanges in general. That agreement said the state and the Interior Department would work toward trading the scattered sections of state-owned land out of national parks and military reservations and into BLM land.

To the Park Service and National Parks and Conservation Association, a citizens group, however, that understanding does not fit Bangerter's proposed trade.

Does Lake Powell need more facilities? Gov. Bangerter, whose proposal would double existing hotel rooms, boat ramps, slips and rental areas, says yes, since demand for facilities exceeds supply at the lake. Glen Canyon is the nation's most popular public recreation facility.

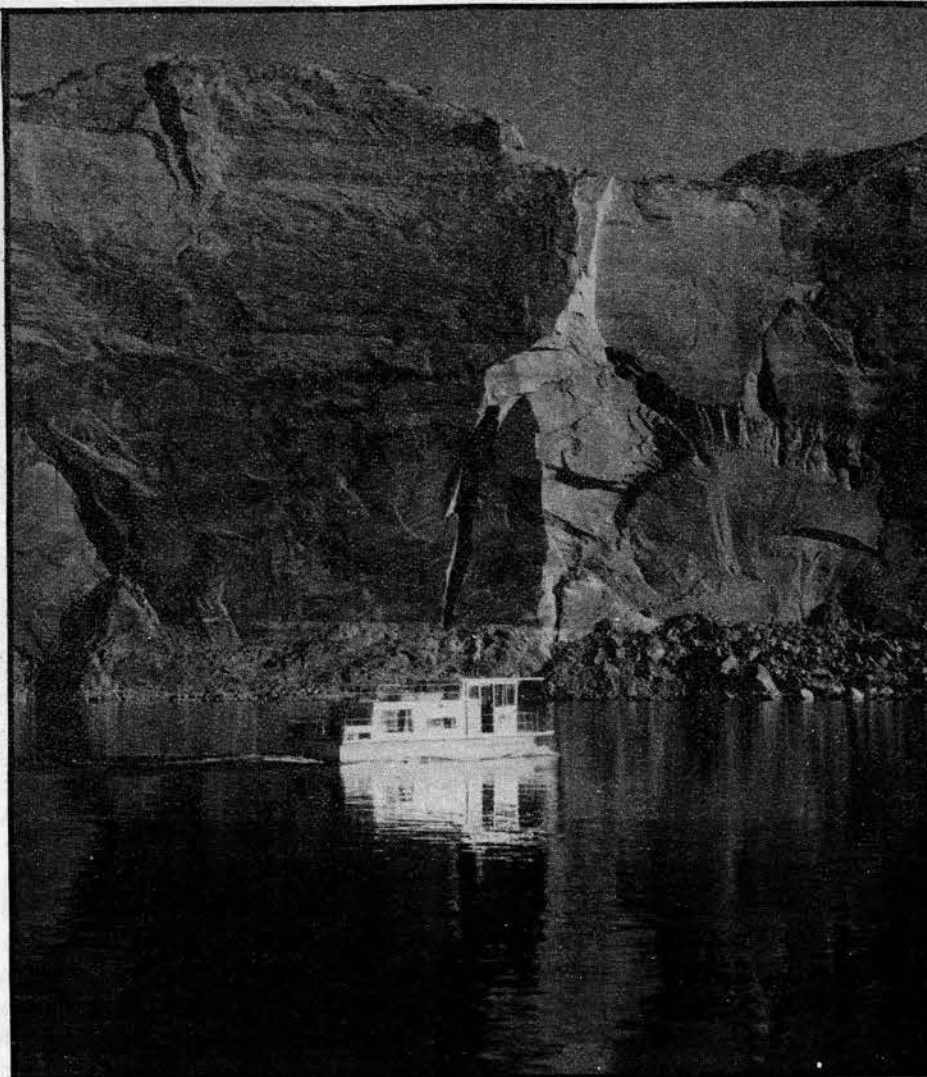
Superintendent Lancaster agrees demand is increasing, but says the area's management plan already calls for expanding the lake's seven marinas to what he calls the limits of the area's carrying capacity. Carrying capacity is different for each zone of the lake and is defined by physical constraints such as the number of on-shore campsites, water quality and boats on the water at one time.

The number of visitors to Lake Powell last summer was the highest yet, approaching 3 million. That is half of the lake's theoretical overall carrying-capacity. When the lake was beginning to fill in 1974, a study predicted tourism would never surpass 500,000 people a year.

The Park Service has wrestled with the issue of the lake's success. But Mike Medberry, Utah field representative for The Wilderness Society in Salt Lake City, says after the Park Service studied all five of the areas proposed for development by the state, it rejected all of them as unsuitable.

Expansion at the lake that is scheduled, however, depends on the Park Service starting to build facilities for water supply and sewage treatment systems. Until it does, Del Webb Recreational Properties, the

F.A. Barnes



Lake Powell near Rainbow Bridge

major Lake Powell concessionaire, can't move on its planned expansion. Del Webb says it plans to spend \$40 million over the next four years for more facilities at Lake Powell.

Congress, recognizing the recreational area's needs, released some funds this year enabling the Park Service and Del Webb to expand services. The Wahweap marina near Page already has a new electrical system, 130 new boat slips, a remodeled lodge and a new parking lot. There are also plans for an Olympic-size swimming pool and amphitheater.

A new fuel dock was installed at the Hite marina and the sewer system was expanded. At Bullfrog marina, a new laundromat/shower house/store was built at the trailer village, new slips were added to the marina, a new dorm was constructed and roads were paved.

All this expansion relieved some of the congestion at the lake, but a 16 percent growth rate over the past

six years has kept the Park Service hard-pressed to provide adequate facilities, says the agency.

Although Bangerter's proposal attempts to relieve some facility pressures, his proposal "seems to be based on the presumption that parks were established to make money and serve the state's interest," says Terri Martin of the National Parks and Conservation Association. "They're not."

The trade would require congressional approval, and according to Martin, "Congress will never allow states to acquire property within a national park -- especially for commercial development."

No one denies the area is crowded every summer. Just how popular Lake Powell has become surprised even the Park Service. But the agency says private development would threaten the quality of experience that now attracts so many people.

--Diane Hackl

Grizzly pen proposed for Dubois

Incorrigible grizzly bears may someday have their own sanctuary near Dubois, Wyo. A non-profit corporation, The American Grizzly Bear Preservation Foundation, proposes building a preserve for problem grizzlies on 2,300 acres of Shoshone National Forest land north of Dubois. Shoshone National Forest Supervisor Steve Mealey said he welcomes the plan, which would allow problem bears to live rather than be killed for their behavior. Mealey said he discussed the proposal several times with the preserve's spokesman, J. Larry Hedrick, news director of KVOW in Riverton. "My response is that it would be a positive opportunity that might enhance the Dubois community," Mealey said. Hedrick said his group would present its idea to a November

meeting of the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee, and then will ask the Wyoming Economic Development and Stabilization Board for \$25,000 to fund a two-to-three month study on how to build the preserve. A smaller grizzly bear enclosure is proposed on about 30 acres within a development planned at West Yellowstone, Mont. for the purpose of displaying grizzlies to tourists who normally don't see bears in Yellowstone.

BARBS

Thus did a potential Yippie instead become a Yuppie.

Secretary of Education William Bennett decided not to join students for a Democratic Society after his brother warned him that it would look bad on his resume.

HOTLINE

Eroding erosion

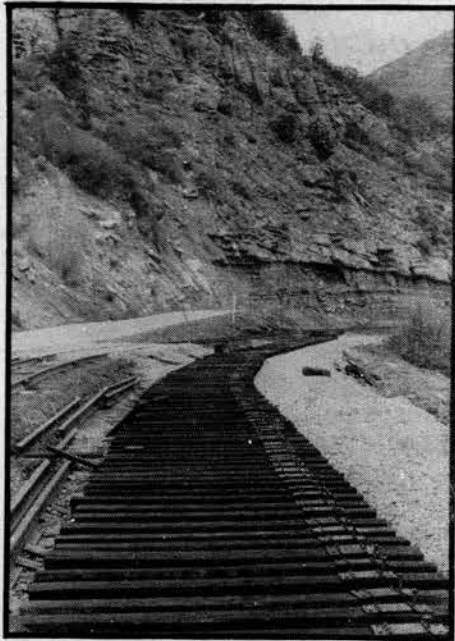
The U.S. Department of Agriculture reports its Conservation Resource Program has cut soil erosion in the United States by 16 percent in just two years of operation. Under the reserve program, farmers have retired nearly 23 million acres of highly erodible farmland, replacing crops with permanent cover and cutting soil erosion by 467 million tons annually. Soil Conservation Service Chief Wilson Scaling says the program is already half-way to its 1990 goal of retiring 40-45 million acres, which should cut erosion on all cultivated land in the nation by 25 percent (*HCN*, 10/26/87). For farmers who sign a 10-year contract, the program pays up to 50 percent of the cost of planting grasses and trees, as well as an average annual rental fee of \$48.40 per acre. Farmers in 46 states are participating, and Texas leads the pack with 2.8 million acres retired and 104 million tons of soil saved annually. In the West, Montana has retired 1.7 million acres, cutting erosion by 23.5 million tons and Colorado has retired 1.5 million acres, saving 40.9 million tons. In other states in the region, North Dakota has retired 1.4 million acres, Idaho and South Dakota .6 million acres each, New Mexico .5 million acres, and Utah and Wyoming .2 million acres each.



Bird poachers netted

A poaching network was stopped after federal authorities arrested 14 people. They were accused of killing close to 700 federally protected migratory birds over the past 18 months. Eleven of the 14 men, including a Gallup, N.M., patrolman, were arrested in northwest New Mexico; the other three were arrested in Wisconsin, Idaho and Texas. The poachers reportedly killed 50 or more bird species including 60 bald and golden eagles to make copies of Indian artifacts. Headdresses, fans, lances, rattles and jewelry were sold to stores in the Gallup area, the East Coast and Europe, where an eagle-tail fan can bring from \$200 to \$800, according to U.S. Attorney William Lutz. The men were charged with violating the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, a felony that carries a penalty of two years in jail and a \$2,000 fine, as well as the Lacey Act, a law prohibiting transport or sale of illegally taken wildlife with a penalty of up to five years in jail and a \$20,000 fine. Another 24 individuals received summonses to appear in court for various wildlife law violations, Lutz said. Clark Babin, chief of law enforcement for the Fish and Wildlife Service, says as many as 50 people could face charges of illegally killing birds, selling them or some related offense.

HOTLINE



Coal slurry revisited

The coal industry has high hopes that a bill before Congress will break a monopoly railroads enjoy. Sponsored by Sens. Bennett Johnson, D-La., and James McClure, R-Idaho, and 15 others, the bill gives pipeline companies the power of eminent domain to compel land owners -- including railroads -- to allow coal slurry pipelines to cross their property. The coal industry says a pipeline network carrying coal suspended in water from mines to market will dramatically lower the cost of coal and bring the industry back to life. The industry has tried for nearly 25 years to build a competitive slurry network, only to be blocked by rail companies that own much of the land pipelines need to cross. Railroads say coal-hauling contracts amount to 25 percent of their cargo and without them rail lines will be unprofitable to operate. Observers on Capitol Hill say the bill may set off a major economic fight and warn that coal slurry faces additional opposition in the West because of environmental impacts and conflicts over water rights. The last attempt to give slurry pipelines eminent domain was defeated in 1983.

Free to roam

This winter, Yellowstone National Park bison will be allowed to roam without paternalistic interference. Last year, park rangers tried to turn the buffalo back from crossing the park's boundary by shooting rubber bullets at them and making loud noises. It was for their own good. Buffalo that leave the park's protection are subject to slaughter under a special Montana hunting program designed to prevent park bison from carrying brucellosis to domestic cattle herds. "We will not be doing any aversive conditioning on a sustained or regular basis," said Dan Sholly, chief ranger. In recent winters, the bison migrated across the northern boundary near Gardiner, Mont., where they were gunned down by hunters with special permits. Sholly said the only way to stop the bison from leaving the park would be to build a fence along the northern boundary, but park officials are not considering that option. Last winter, rangers helped property owners try to haze the animals back into the park, mostly from the Church Universal and Triumphant's Royal Teton Ranch. Montana game officials said a hunt will happen this winter.

Does Park Service have a grizzly 'hit list'?

Last month's execution of a grizzly bear in Yellowstone National Park has sparked a controversy over the possibility of a Park Service "hit list" for troublesome bears.

Grizzly bear number 83, a 20-year-old female, was shot and wounded in the foot in a botched attempt to kill it two days before it was trapped and executed, reported a copyrighted story in the Jackson Hole News.

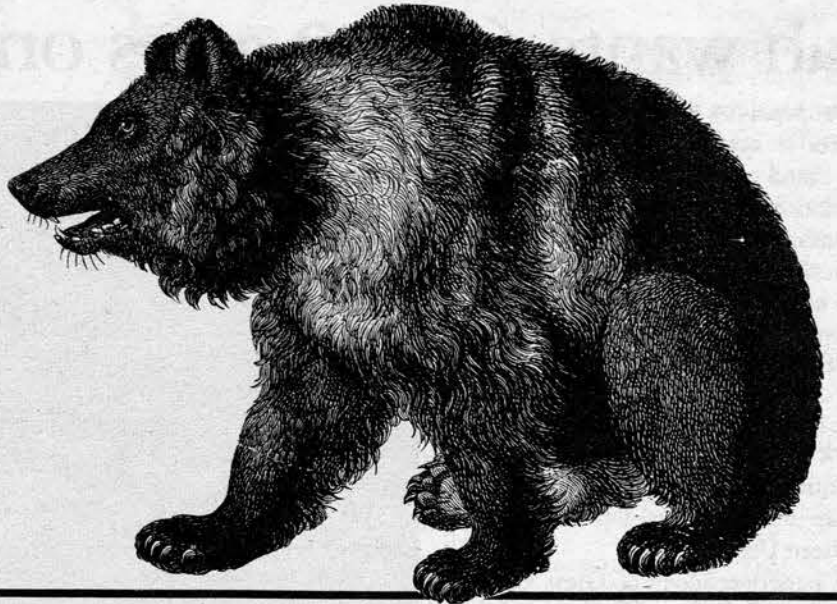
Wyoming environmentalists say the wounding was not only macabre, but also shows the bear was slated for termination. Hank Phibbs, a Jackson Hole attorney and former president of the Greater Yellowstone Coalition, accused the Park Service of keeping a hit list of problem bears, like number 83.

Phibbs said, "They have a list of troublesome bears and if any of those bears get in trouble again it is targeted for termination. They don't call it a 'hit list', but from my perspective the bears that are on that list are targeted for removal."

Yellowstone Assistant Superintendent Ben Clary says the Park Service and federal Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee keep a history of all bears in the greater Yellowstone area. "Everytime we have to make a management decision we (refer) to the record on what's happened to that bear," says Clary. "No bears are marked for removal."

He says decisions about the fate of a problem bear are made case by case under guidelines established by the 1983 Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan. Generally, park officials give problem bears more chances than the guidelines allow, says Clary. But in the case of bear 83 (HCN, 11/9/87), Clary said, "There's some behavior you can't tolerate in the ecosystem. We can't say we'll wait until she takes someone out."

John Barlow, president of the



Wyoming Outdoor Council, which tried to get a court order to stay the execution of bear 83, says, "Once a bear becomes a problem in the eyes of the Park Service its chances of survival are not very high."

He says the park's record with problem bears is abysmal. A Park Service report written last spring shows 63 bears have been lost in the greater Yellowstone ecosystem since 1981 because of repeated conflict with humans. The report, "The consequences of protecting problem grizzly bears," says that of 54 adult female grizzlies that have undergone Park Service management actions, 30 have been eliminated, seven are probably gone and the remaining 17 are headed for trouble. Of 38 cubs born to 16 of those females, 21 have been eliminated, five are probably gone, five will probably be removed, two were abandoned when their mother was executed, and five more are headed for trouble. There are a minimum of 200 bears in the ecosystem, by Park Service figures.

The problem, says Phibbs, is the Park Service definition of a bad bear is too severe, but there is no way to question a management decision to

remove a "problem" grizzly. "They make a decision about a bear and it is picked up and killed within 24 hours. No one has a chance to question it," says Phibbs.

Barlow says the Park Service views contacts between bears and humans as conflict, and the bears as the ones who must lose. "We have to decide whether or not these conflicts merit the elimination of the species from the park."

Park officials agree that the statistics on bear-human conflict are not good. Gary Brown, Yellowstone Assistant Chief Ranger responsible for bear management, says, "It shows for all our efforts, leniency and extra chances, it has bought us very little for the grizzly population." Once bears learn to associate humans with food, the chances of problems developing increase, Brown says. Bears do not unlearn that lesson easily.

But Brown adds that none of the bears the park is currently worried about as problem bears will be executed at the next conflict. "We will give them several more chances."

--Steve Hinchman

BOOKS

Exploited in prose

The Kingdom in the Country

James Conaway. Boston, Massachusetts 02108, 1987. 293 pages. \$17.95, cloth.

—Review by Philip Fradkin

At one point in his six-month van ride through the West, author James Conaway was confronted by a radical environmentalist who asked, "What's the slant of your book?" Conaway gave the reflexive journalistic answer that it had no slant, to which his inquisitor replied with an obscenity.

Conaway, a Washingtonian, did come West with "a slant." It is one that is fairly prevalent on the other coast; and that is that almost everything between the Pacific Ocean and the Rocky Mountains is skewered and a bit crazy. (As a former Easterner, I feel that way whenever I briefly return to the land of my upbringing; but I wouldn't write a book about those funny people.)

Conaway's subjects are not as grotesque as the people who inhabited photographer Richard Avedon's stark vision of the West of two years

ago, the book and traveling museum exhibit *In the American West*. Those unsuspecting individuals were posed against a merciless blank background.

The difference between Avedon's visual exploitation -- and the West is no stranger to exploitation by Easterners -- and Conaway's prose is that the author places his people up against the backdrop of the public lands in the West.

Superimposed against the mountains, deserts, forests, rivers, and rangelands of the West, his federal land-managers and users and their ways of life begin to take on a sweaty reality, such as in the description of coffee being "the social glue of the West." Anyone who has been invited to sit down and talk over his fifth cup of weak coffee in a morning knows the truth of that description.

Then Conaway loses reality and replaces it with stereotypes. There is the woman Bureau of Land Management district manager with "luminous red hair and a stellar smile -- genetic imperatives among southern California women, it seemed." You can see her up against Avedon's

THE KINGDOM IN THE COUNTRY

Whirlers, shepherds, miners & bureaucrats, squatters & gunfighters, Indians & other inhabitants of the land nobody owns

JAMES CONAWAY

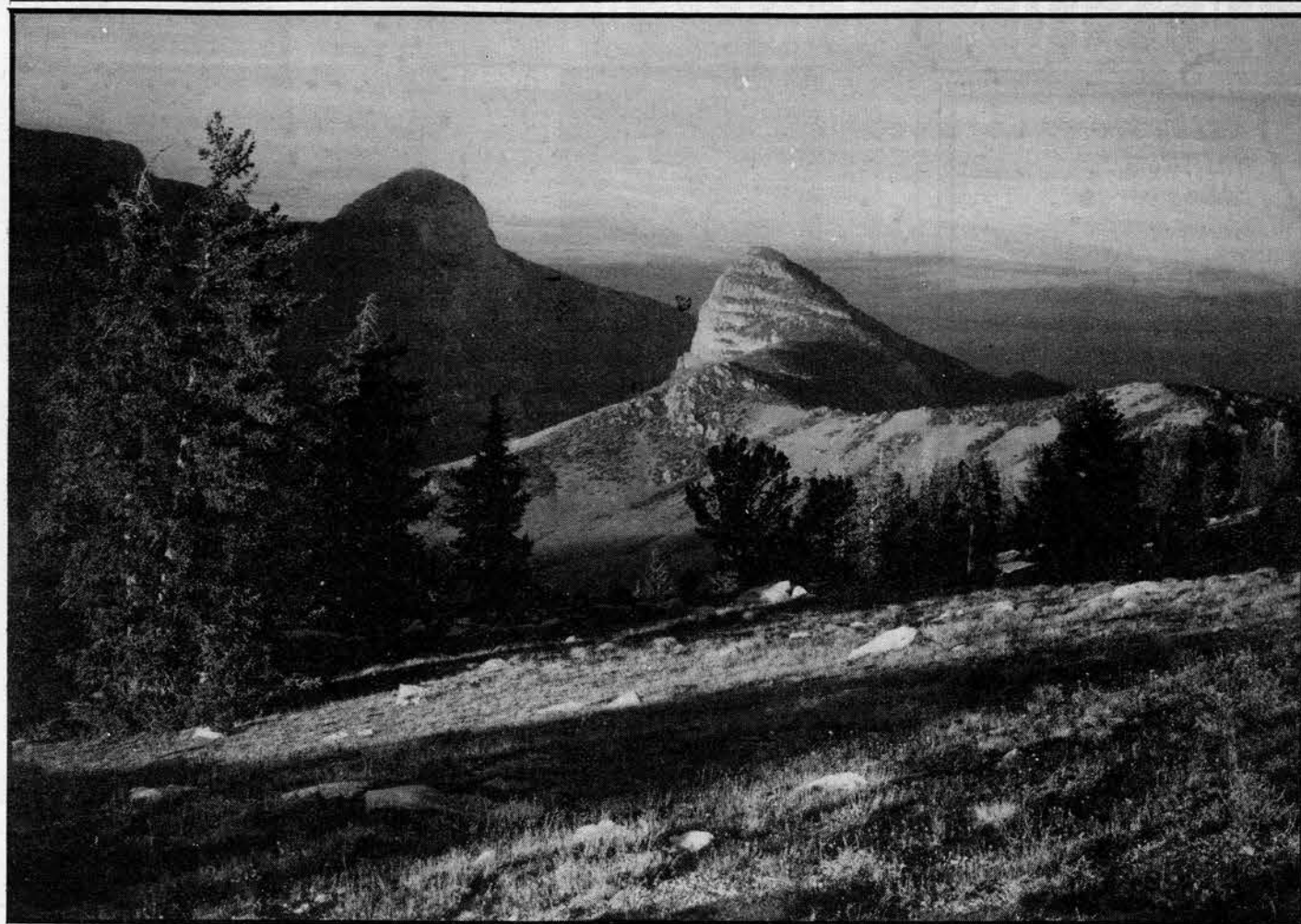


blank background, but not in the desert that she administered.

The value of the book is in its quick, contemporary tour of the varied activities and people who use or administer the vast bulk of land in the West. But a quick tour brings shallow results unless the observer has an unusual eye, or a new slant.

□

Philip Fradkin is the author of a book on land and the West to be published next year by Knopf.



The basin of the Deep Creek Mountains at 11,000 feet with Utah's Great Salt Lake Desert in the background

Trying to save the Deep Creek Mountains

Southwest of Salt Lake City across 100 miles of desert, the Deep Creek Mountains loom to over 12,000 feet, a rise from the basin floor that is greater than that between Jenny Lake and the top of the Grand Teton in Wyoming.

Ibapah and Haystack peaks in the Deep Creeks are snow capped early in autumn and late in spring, bringing to this otherwise parched land a perennial source of moisture and grandeur.

Utah conservationists would like to see the Deep Creek Mountains protected as wilderness. But the Bureau of Land Management's Deep Creek Mountains wilderness study area looks as if it has had a bite taken out of its midsection. A 3,200-acre chunk of private land in an area known as "the Basin" nearly divides two larger portions of the study area and has long been a management problem for the BLM.

The Nature Conservancy hopes to bring about a land exchange which would transfer ownership of this 3,200-acre section to the Bureau of Land Management, eventually allowing the land to be managed as wilderness. The exchange, which has been held up since 1985, would also involve transfer of a 25-acre parcel of BLM land near Saint George, Utah, to a private party.

The Deep Creek Mountains are a good example of island biogeography, according to Dave Livermore, director of the Great Basin Field office of the Nature Conservancy. "The Deeps are a mountain range isolated in a sea of desert." He said, "Because of this quality, unique plant and animal species have evolved." The Nature Conservancy has identified five rare plant species, an endemic species of blue grouse, and important bighorn sheep habitat in the basin. The Nature Conservancy is a non-profit conservation group with 260,000 members.

Additionally, the Utah Wilderness Coalition, an association of 23 environmental groups in Utah, has proposed that 76,000 acres of the Deep Creeks be protected as wilderness. The BLM recommended 51,000

acres for wilderness in its 1986 draft on wilderness, citing mineral conflicts on the east and north sides of the Deep Creeks and private and state inholdings as reasons for the smaller proposal.

In an unlikely turn of events, legislation recently introduced as a rider to the Senate appropriations bill by Utah Sen. Jake Garn may provide the means for approval of the land exchange being brokered by the Nature Conservancy. The exchange was halted in 1985 as an unexpected consequence of a lawsuit filed by the National Wildlife Federation. A court injunction then forbid the BLM from exchanging any lands released from withdrawals by former Interior Secretary James Watt.

Rodney Greeno, issues coordinator for the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance, says that the National Wildlife Federation lawsuit helped Utah by reinstating millions of acres of conservation withdrawals. "But with that good came some difficulties for BLM trades like the one in the Deep Creeks."

According to Tom Terry, realty specialist for the BLM, "the BLM lands being offered (near Saint George) were under a Bureau of Reclamation withdrawal when the lawsuit was filed, and we were not able to complete the exchange because of the injunction." Terry added that "98 percent of all land exchanges that we begin negotiations on aren't completed, but this one seemed a natural to go-through."

The 25-acre parcel near Saint George is prime development land, Terry said, being adjacent to condominiums on one side, a school on the other, a gravel pit behind, and a golf course and retirement housing in front.

The Garn rider would exempt the Deep Creek Mountains land exchange from the National Wildlife Federation lawsuit. However, it would also exempt from the injunction approximately 40,000 acres of BLM land in the Dixie Resource Area which surrounds the 25 acre parcel. Amendments to the rider are being proposed by conservation-

ists which would require that any exchange within the 40,000 acre area be subject to the planning provisions in federal environmental law. It is otherwise considered "non-controversial," and likely to gain the support of key Congressmen Bruce Vento, D-Minn., and Sidney Yates, D-Ill.

Donald Pendelton, district manager for the BLM, Richfield District, is responsible for management of a large portion of the Deep Creek Mountain area. "This exchange has been hanging fire for eight years, and we'd like to see it go," Pendelton said.

BLM Salt Lake district manager Deane Zeller, who shares jurisdiction over the Deep Creek Mountains, said, "The Deep Creeks don't come in halves, quarters or sixteenths -- they're a unit."

Zeller said the BLM is "looking at an enlarged recommended wilderness proposal" for the Deep Creeks in a final wilderness environmental impact statement due next year. "Public comment supports it, further analysis of mineralized areas showed less potential than we had originally believed, and based purely on ecological reasoning, we think it's a good idea," he said.

Action on the appropriations bill is likely in both houses of Congress before the end of the 100th Session in December.

□

Mike Medberry is Utah representative for The Wilderness Society.

BARBS

So what! Everyone makes mistakes. After all, she only dated him once.

Secretary of Education William Bennett says he once dated rock singer Janis Joplin, who later died of a drug overdose.

Former President Richard Nixon would be perfect to head up the evaluation committee.

Montana Secretary of State Jim Waltermire wants elected officials to evaluate newspaper reporters.

HOTLINE



Elusive bulls

Two, 1,500-pound buffaloes escaped from their pen and roamed through rural and suburban areas of Salt Lake City, Utah for five days. Attempts to corral the bulls were futile as they charged horses and trampled chain-link fences. Horseback riders tracked the shaggy beasts for two days, but lost the trail when it cut through an elk herd. The buffaloes were finally located from an airplane but it took another two days to shoot them with tranquilizer darts. The owner's son, Brant Jones, told AP that the delay in capturing the buffaloes was caused by their cunning: "All you can do is spread out and suggest where to go."

FRAUD IN INDIAN COUNTRY A billion-dollar betrayal

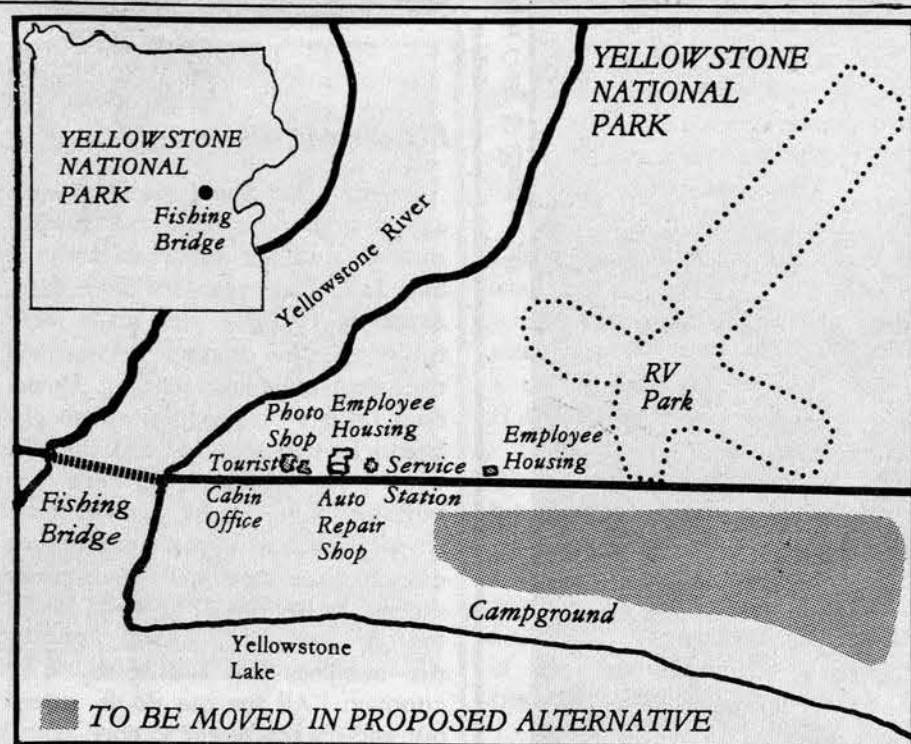
A reprint of a series that appeared in the Oct. 4-11, 1987, editions of *The Arizona Republic*.

Intractable agency

The power of the press is being felt at the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The Senate Select Committee on Indian Affairs has ordered an investigation of the agency following publication of a series in the *Arizona Republic* that uncovered evidence of massive fraud, abuse and mismanagement (HCN, 10/26/87). The Senate investigation, to be chaired by Arizona Sen. Dennis DeConcini, D, will focus primarily on allegations that the Indian agency failed to collect billions of dollars in mineral royalties owed the tribes. It will also look at possible failures and corruption in Indian housing, health care, education, economic development and other programs. Committee chair Sen. Daniel Inouye, D-Hawaii, says the investigation could last anywhere from six months to six years. BIA officials told AP the allegations were based on previous government investigations, and that many of those problems have been corrected. But at a recent hearing before the House subcommittee on Interior Appropriations -- also prompted by the *Republic* series -- Interior Secretary Donald Hodel and BIA chief Ross Swimmer said problems at the agency will not easily go away. Hodel said the bureau will not become effective until the agency's role is defined and streamlined, reports the *Sho-Ban News*. Swimmer told the committee that many needs of Indians could be better served by other federal agencies, the states and the tribes themselves. The newspaper series is \$2.50 from the *Arizona Republic*, Box 1950, Phoenix, AZ 85001.

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BULLETIN BOARD



FISHING BRIDGE

Yellowstone National Park has released its draft environmental impact statement and development plan for the Fishing Bridge area, which is, unfortunately, extremely popular with both the tourists and grizzly bears. As early as 1973, the Park Service recommended closing down the 310 campsites there to avoid bear-human interactions that usually led to a destroyed bear. The draft EIS recommends removing the campground, auto repair shop, service station and photo shop. The 360-site recreational park, however, would remain open. A replacement campground and comfort station would be built at Lodgepole, 1.5 miles south of Bridge Bay on Yellowstone Lake, and a service station and repair shop might be built in the lake area. The agency's preferred alternative lists nine more actions to offset impacts to grizzlies from facilities remaining at Fishing Bridge. They include removal of the Fishing Bridge contractor's camp,

ball field and helipad; obliteration of informal trails and closure of the area beyond the old campground; special night patrols to discourage bears from entering remaining developed sites; removal of roads and restrictions on travel in the nearby backcountry. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has issued a simultaneous biological opinion that backs the Park Service plan as not likely to jeopardize continued existence of grizzly bears in Yellowstone. The Fish and Wildlife Service estimates the Park Service plan will return 1,577 acres of habitat to the bears and reduce human-bear conflicts by 57 percent in the Fishing Bridge area and 10 percent in the park overall. The draft EIS is available from Yellowstone National Park, Yellowstone, WY 82190 (307/344-7381). Public comment on the plan must be received by Dec. 16. Comments should be addressed to Robert Barbee, Superintendent at the above address.

WILD POEMS

Roses are red, violets are blue, poets are creating and so should you. The Utah Wilderness Association is sponsoring its third annual wilderness poetry competition, and poets are invited to participate by sending in unpublished poems relating to the theme of wilderness, its preservation, its life and values or its spiritual nature. First prize is \$100; the winning poet and top five honorable mentions will see print in the centerfold of the spring 1988 Utah Wilderness Association Review. The deadline for entry is Feb. 1, 1988. For contest rules, contact POETRY/Utah Wilderness Association, 455 E. 400 South, #306, Salt Lake City, UT 84111.

FLY-TYING BY HELEN SHAW

This is a coffee-table book, if your coffee table is used to tie flies. It contains several hundred black and white photos showing, step by step, how you can create something that, properly cast and jigged, a fish will mistake for a living creature. The book is a reprint of a book first printed 25 years ago, and includes all the original chapters on tools, thread, floss, wool, dubbing, hairs, quill and feathers. The photos were taken by Hermann Kessler, long-time art director of *Field and Stream*.

Nick Lyons Books, 31 West 21 St., New York, NY 10010. Hardcover: \$16.95. 320 pages; 250 photos.

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SECRETARY/RECEPTIONIST fulltime needed for non-profit environmental organization. Strong knowledge of IBM computer and Word Perfect a must. \$13,000 per year, non-smoking office. Send resume to Phyllis Ripple, the Nature Conservancy, 1244 Pine St., Boulder, CO 80302. (1xb)

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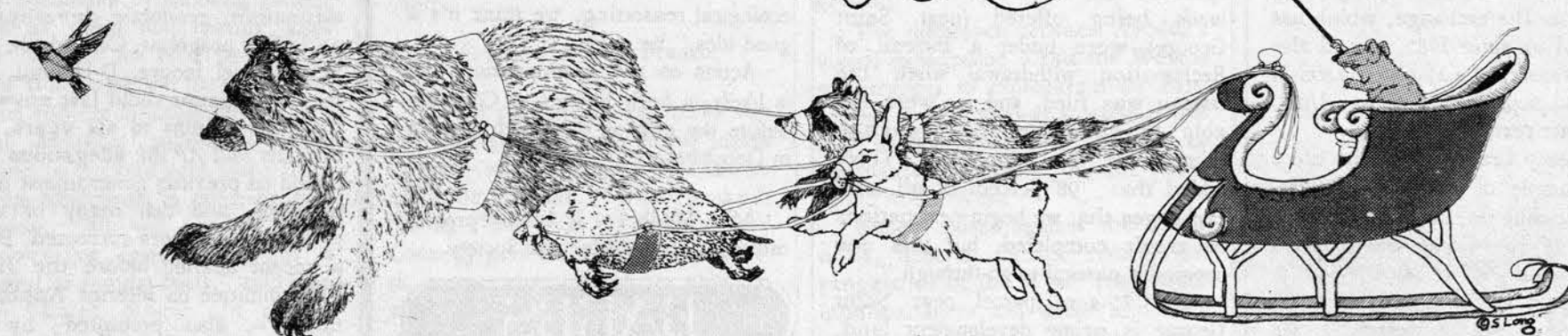
GRIZZLY TRACK -- Front paw print of a large Grizzly handsomely cast in stoneware. Hang on wall, set on table, or a great Christmas gift (next day shipping). Call or write for more info. \$21.00 postpaid. Check or Bankcard accepted. Masterpiece Creations -- Box 2294 Kalispell, Montana 59901 (406/257-0820). (5x20p)

Lightning bugs, 4th generation Ozark farm, deauthorized Meramec Park Dam in HAY JOURNAL, by Sandy Primm. Pawpaw Press, Rt. 6, Box 456, Rolla, MO 65401. (2x21p)

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VERMONT OR OREGON, prime recreational properties. Townhouse, three bedrooms, two baths at four-season resort fronting Three Sisters Wilderness, perfect for children. Or, four bedroom, two bath house on 20 acres in Vermont fishing club, beautiful mountain views, 10 miles from Stowe. \$95,000 each. Carolyn Dejanikus, 4405 Boxwood Rd., Bethesda, MD 20816 (301/229-2788). (1xp)

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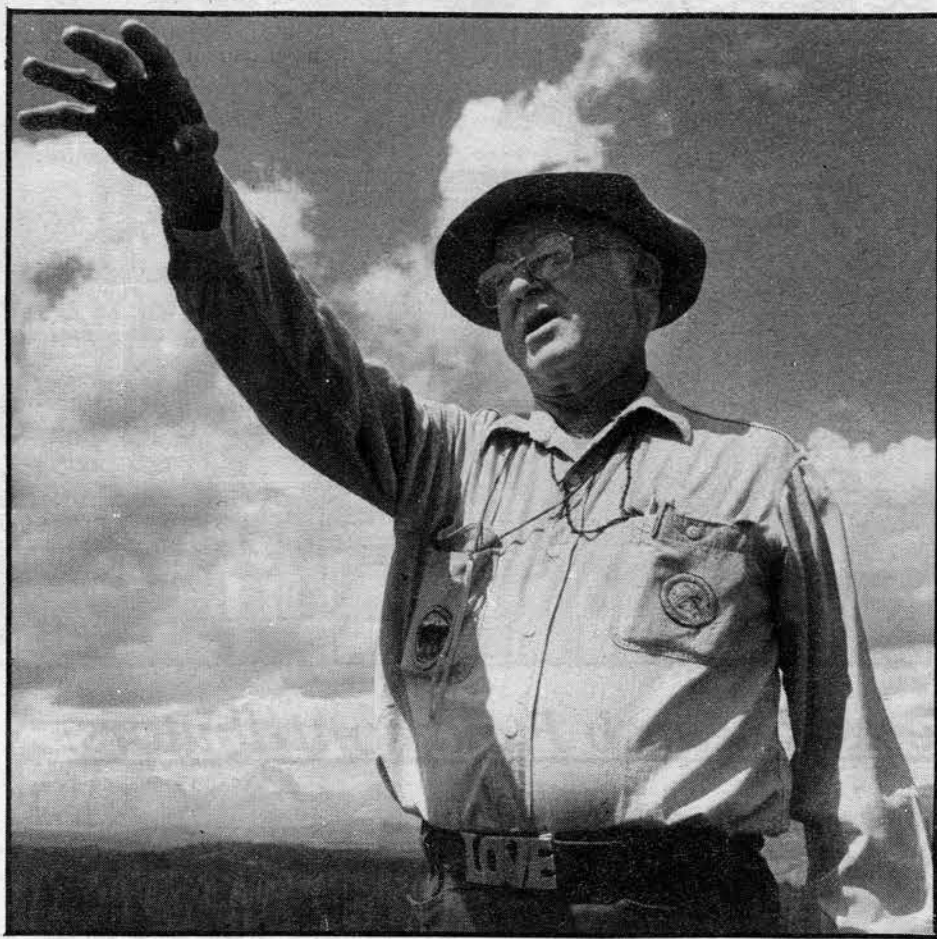
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Geologist David Love

IN HONOR OF LOVE

A scholar known as "the grand old man of Rocky Mountain geology" is the namesake of the new J. David Love Field Geology Fellowship, established by the Wyoming Geological Association. Love has worked and become an authority on everything from geochemistry to structural and environmental geology. He is also known to *New Yorker* magazine readers. Author John McPhee traveled through Wyoming with Love and says in his book, *Rising From the Plains*, that Love is "regarded by colleagues as one of the two or three most influential geologists in the (Geological) Survey." The fellowship would allow one student each year to receive significant help in paying basic expenses during a summer of studying field geology in Wyoming. To contribute to the fellowship, write Love Fellowship, Wyoming Geological Association, Box 345, Casper, WY 82602.

WITTY CALENDARS

"Saguaro cactus killed man in Arizona, 1982." "I couldn't do anything about anything, was about what it came down to," -- Ken Kesey. And in 1935, water began backing up at Hoover Dam. How do we know these arcane facts? We just looked at the 1988 Western Wilderness Calendar published by Dream Garden Press. Its first calendar five years ago was Edward Abbey's Western Wilderness; the Salt Lake City publisher, which has always been an advocate of conservation, now has several calendars on the market, each a blend of gorgeous color photos and quirky, sometimes wise quotes. Besides Western Wilderness, there are also calendars devoted to Grand Canyon, Yosemite National Park, Great Smoky Mountains, Big Bend National Park, California Wilderness and our favorite, Utah Wilderness. All are \$8.95 except America's National Parks Calendar, \$9.95. Add \$2 each for postage. Dream Garden Press is at Box 27076, Salt Lake City, UT 84127.

SWELLING THE RANKS

Utah is indeed a magnet for environmentalists since yet another environmental advocate has set up shop in Salt Lake City. Lawson LeGate will staff the Sierra Club public lands office and serve as the group's associate southwest regional representative. LeGate, who comes to the position after chairing the club's Oregon chapter, says his mission is to promote the Sierra Club and Utah Wilderness Coalition's 5.1 million-acre wilderness proposal. That proposal is twice the amount recommended by the Bureau of Land Management's. LeGate will share office space with the club's Utah chapter at 88 South Second East, Salt Lake City, UT 84111 (801/363-9621).

A SIERRA CLUB ANNIVERSARY

The Sierra Club tells us its calendars featuring "pinups" of wild animals and the great outdoors first appeared 20 years ago. The rest is history, as many environmental groups now publish their own distinctive and colorful calendars. The San Francisco-based Sierra Club still sells the most, topping the one million mark in annual sales last year. It also continues to attract excellent photographers, who sent in some 65,000 slides last year. Only 160 photos can be found in the new calendars. For 1988, the group offers a wildlife calendar, \$7.95; wilderness calendar, \$7.95; trail calendar, \$7.95; small engagement calendar, \$8.95; and pocket calendar, \$5.95. The publisher is Random House, 201 East 50th St., New York NY 10022.

SUCCESSFUL INTERNS

Interns may be just starting up the totem pole in the professional world, but working for free can be a solid training ground for people who want to make a difference. That's the philosophy that led the Northern Rockies Action Group to publish a brief guide to designing and running high-quality internships. The 21-page *Successful Internships: A Guide For Public Interest Groups* was researched by interviewing interns, host organizations and colleges from around the nation. The paper describes a typical internship and the role it plays in an organization; how to design a program, including job descriptions, benefits and salary; how to advertise and recruit interns, including a list of publications and contacts to find them; and ideas on supervision, feedback and evaluation. The booklet costs \$4, plus 75 cents postage and handling. Send prepaid orders to NRAG, 9 Placer St., Helena, MT 59601 (406/442-6615).

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MAMMALS IN WYOMING

The goals of conservation of habitat and natural diversity guide the discussion of a new book on Wyoming's 117 species of mammals. *Mammals in Wyoming*, by biologists Tim Clark and Mark Stromberg, is the first complete survey of the state's mammals in 20 years. The authors cite a Wyoming Game and Fish Department estimate that \$643 million is generated each year by wildlife-related recreational activity. For wildlife biologists as well as amateur naturalists, this book provides information on species description, size, range, habitat, reproduction, peculiarities and distribution within Wyoming counties.

University Press of Kansas, 329 Carruth, Lawrence, KS 66045. Cloth: \$25; paper: \$12.95. 314 pages. Illustrated with sketches, maps and black and white photographs.

FIGHTING FOR A ROAD

The West Fork Alliance, a new citizens group based in the southwest Colorado county of Dolores, is fighting the reconstruction and paving of the West Fork Valley road. An affiliate of the consumer coalition Western Colorado Congress, the alliance has 40 members who want to keep the 25 miles of gravel road just the way they are. The group questions the plan of the Forest Service, Federal Highway Administration and Colorado Highway Department to spend \$15 million to pave a lightly traveled road along the West Fork of the Dolores River. The agencies say safety is the concern since two accidents involving drunk drivers have occurred on the road in the past few years. The alliance has begun a survey of road users, it says, and so far the consensus is that people don't want the character of the valley or its road to change. For more information contact the West Fork Alliance, P.O. Box 1257, Dolores, CO 81323.



LOOK UP

The birdwatchers annual marathon is drawing near. The Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society invites people to the 44th annual Christmas Bird Count in Billings, Mont., Dec. 19. The group needs help counting, compiling results and enjoying hot vegetable/meat soup and Christmas bread and cookies at the end of the day. For more information, call Helen Carlson, 406/248-8684.

David Brion



COLORADO ON THE EDGE

The Colorado Environmental Coalition and the University of Colorado Environmental Center are sponsoring a two-day conference called "Colorado on the Edge." It begins Feb. 12 at 7:30 p.m. in Denver with talks by Rep. Pat Schroeder, D-Colo., and Colorado Gov. Roy Romer, D. A panel with Sen. Bill Armstrong, R-Colo., former Colorado state senators Martha Ezzard and Tom Glass, Sierra Club representative Maggie Fox and water lawyer Greg Hobbs will discuss different perspectives on how to integrate economic growth with environmental concerns. Workshops Feb. 13 in Boulder will look at strategies for future action on public lands, hazardous materials, legislation, recycling, ecosystems/biodiversity, pesticides, agriculture, water, wildlife, air, urban land use and rivers. Environmental leaders from the Sierra Club, Colorado Mountain Club, Trout Unlimited, Colorado Environmental Coalition, National Audubon Society and Colorado Public Interest Research Group will also share suggestions about the future of Colorado's environmental movement. The keynote speaker Feb. 13 is author Roderick Nash, and the conference closes with an "I love Colorado" Valentine's Eve Dance. The conference fee is \$12 for Friday and Saturday programs, plus \$5 for Saturday lunch. The charge is \$15 for all. Contact the CU Environmental Center, UMC 331, Campus Box 207, University of Colorado, Boulder, CO 80309 (303/492-8307).

COLORADO MINING SUMMIT

A Colorado Mining Summit sponsored by the state is set for Nov. 23-24 in Leadville. The meeting will focus on mining policies and practices that would encourage the development of the state's mineral and energy resources. The summit will also address maintaining environmental quality and bringing long-term economic benefits to local communities. Keynote speakers include Attorney General Duane Woodard and Gov. Roy Romer; participants include representatives from the mining industry, federal, state and local regulatory agencies, utilities, transportation companies, conservation and environmental organizations, state and local governments and citizens. For more information, contact the Department of Natural Resources, 1313 Sherman St., Room 718, Denver, CO 80203 (303/866-3311).

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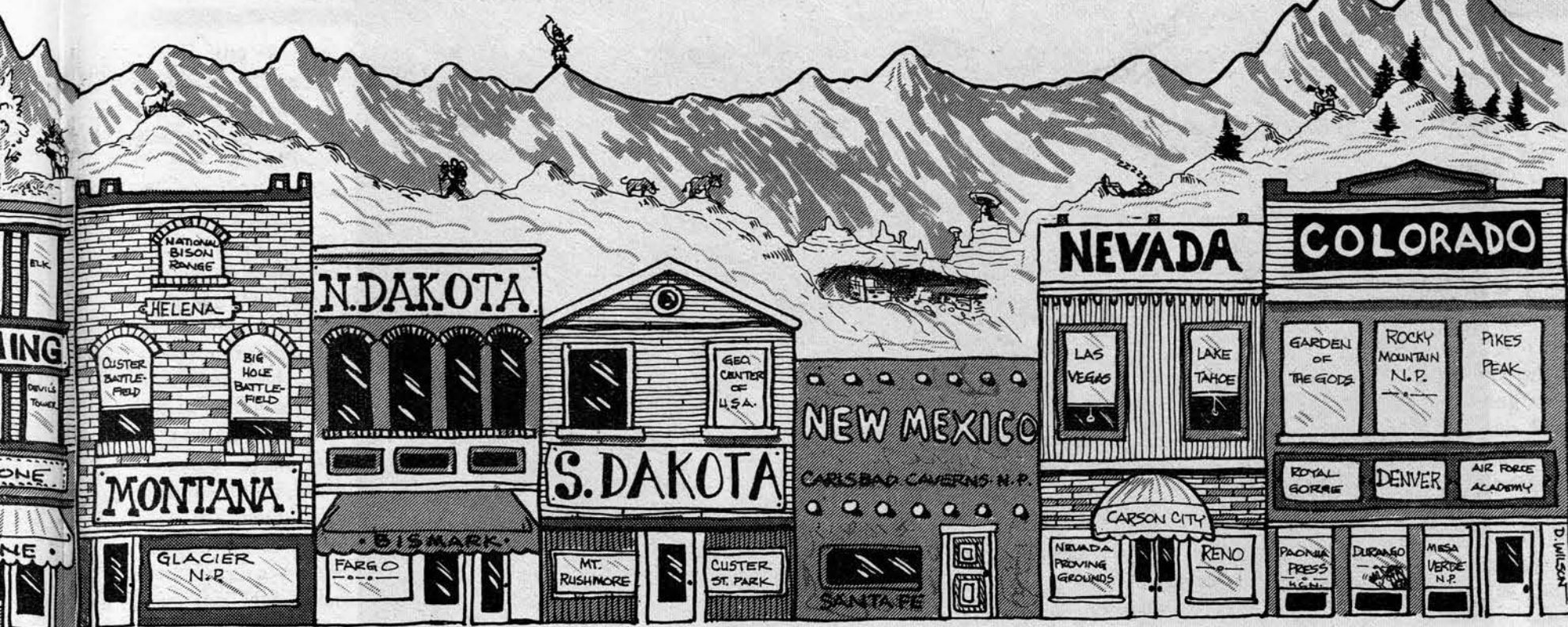
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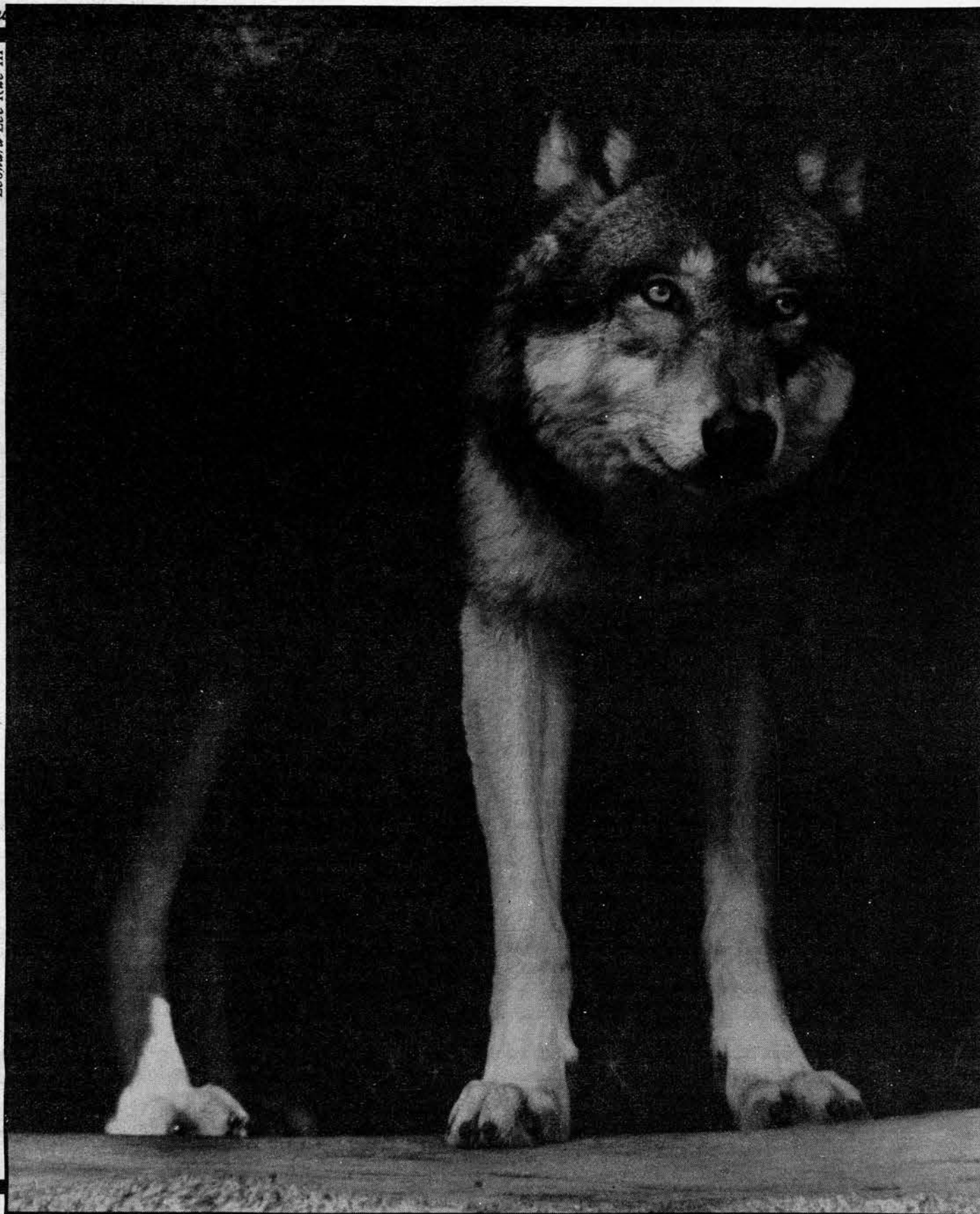
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10-High Country News

Leonard Lee Rue III



Wolf recovery is stopped dead

—by George Wuerthner
and Mollie Matteson

In the late 1880s, about the time the bison was nearly exterminated from the West and all the Indian tribes had been banished to reservations, a cult movement grew among the demoralized Plains Indian tribes known as the "Ghost Dance."

According to believers, if Indians united, and sang the correct songs and did the proper dances, the white man and the changes he had wrought upon the land would disappear and the ghosts of relatives and friends would come back from the dead, along with the vast herds of buffalo.

To the once proud warriors of the Great Plains, nothing could be more appealing than to believe they might again ride over the grasslands in pursuit of the shaggy beasts that had been their staff of life. The movement soon had many adherents who attempted to "dream back the buffalo."

As the movement spread among the tribes, government authorities grew increasingly apprehensive and finally attempted to stop ghost dance assemblies. The dream was shattered one cold January day in 1890 when the U.S. Cavalry massacred more than 300 unarmed Sioux gathered to perform ghost dance rituals at Wounded Knee, S.D.

A hundred years later, the wolf, like the bison to the Plains Indians, has come to symbolize a wilder and freer past to the people of the Rocky Mountains and the nation as a whole. For many, the chance to see, hear or just know that wolves roam the land somehow makes the landscape more complete, not only from an ecological standpoint but

from a philosophical perspective as well.

So when wolves -- without the benefit of biologists -- took it upon themselves to move over the Canadian border, and when a plan was recommended that 10 breeding pairs of wolves be introduced to Yellowstone National Park, it seemed a dream come true. This was a return of the ghosts from our collective pasts.

Around Glacier Park in Montana, biologists confirmed that the Magic Pack, wolves that had recolonized the North Fork of the Flathead drainage along the western border of Glacier Park, had split into three distinct breeding units. Each produced a litter of three pups. And on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation along the east side of Glacier there were reports of still another wolf pack.

Another step forward was the signing of a federal plan that recommended actions to bring about wolf recovery in the Northern Rockies. Park Service Director William Mott warmly backed its goals, which included adding wolves to Yellowstone.

Like the ghost dance of the Plains Indians, the dream was suddenly shattered this fall. The setback was stark, and it included a controversial wolf hunt that began in Canada on Sept. 10 and halted Oct. 30. When it was over, at least 12 and perhaps 13 wolves in the Glacier Park ecosystem were dead or removed for shipping to research centers far from the Rockies. In addition, pressure from Wyoming's congressional delegation blocked any progress on a Yellowstone reintroduction plan.

All events were linked. The wolf hunting season, which was vigorously opposed by many conservationists on both sides of the border, was stopped only after at least six wolves, including four females, had already been killed in British Columbia's portion of the North Fork Flathead River area. This was out of a total estimated population of 26 with more than half being pups of the year. It is necessary to keep in mind that all estimates on wolf numbers are "best guesses" due to the frequent movement of pack members.

All the wolves killed were members of packs that roamed the international border around Glacier Park and hence were part of the population that U.S. officials list as endangered in the Northern Rockies. While they are protected in the United States, wolves crossing the border into Canada are vulnerable to the regulations and policies of a government that considers them abundant and deserving of no special safeguards.

The six dead wolves represent the first legal taking of these animals in the North Fork drainage in more than 20 years. "Legal" is an important distinction since a number of wolves from the Magic Pack have been poached in Canada over the last few years. British Columbia, responding to pressure from outfitters and hunters who felt wolves posed a threat to big game populations, embarked on a province-wide program of predator control that includes killing up to 80 percent of the wolves in some parts of the province.

The growing wolf numbers -- no more than 28 -- in the North Fork of the Flathead drainage prompted B.C. wildlife officials to open the area to hunting and trapping "to get control of wolf numbers before they got out of hand," according to Ray Demarchi, regional biologist for the British Columbia Wildlife Branch.

The death of six wolves was a serious blow to the recovery effort in America, but these documented mortalities may only be the tip of the iceberg, says the American wolf-recovery biologist Mike Fairchild. Some deaths go unreported, says Fairchild, and he knows of at least one outfitter who claims to have "filled a (wolf) pack full of lead." One female pup from this group, known as the Wigwam Pack, has been confirmed to be dead, but the outfitter boasts that he also killed the Wigwam Pack's adult female and wounded the adult male, known to biologists as W8401.

Since hearing this report, biologists have been unable to find the adult female and presume she is dead. They have spotted the male alive, although he appeared to be limping, which may indicate that he was wounded by the spray of bullets. If he dies, Fairchild is unsure whether the five to six pups born this summer will be able to survive the winter without an experienced, healthy adult to help capture big game species like elk and moose -- their primary winter foods.

If these wolves die, the total wolf losses in the North Fork drainage could reach 12 or 13 animals. The population will then have been reduced by half in less than one year.

Wolves in the Flathead drainage are particularly vulnerable to hunters since this is the first year they have had to deal with any of the legal variety.

Fairchild cites an example: Two Canadian hunters spotted five pups of the Sage Creek Pack out in an open meadow. One of the hunters shot a female pup. Although two of the young wolves immediately ran into the timber, the other pups lingered beside their fallen littermate, reportedly trying to nudge it to its feet. These pups only fled after the hunters had approached to within 50 feet. Fortunately for these animals, the hunters chose not to kill another wolf.

John Weaver, endangered species specialist with the Forest Service in Missoula, Mont., sums up current Canadian wolf control: "In the 1940s when wolves began to filter down into the Flathead drainage of B.C., wolves were poisoned with strychnine. It's the same today, except now we poison them with lead." Weaver was, of course, referring to the ballistic type of lead poisoning.

There were other losses on the U.S. side of the border. Six members, including three pups of



Wolf killed by a government trapper in Montana

a seven-member pack that had recently taken up residence on the Blackfoot Indian Reservation east of Glacier Park, were either removed or killed after it was determined that they had preyed upon sheep and cattle on reservation lands. The first confirmed livestock kill occurred in early May of this year, according to Bill Rightmire, Montana director of Animal Damage Control.

Traps were set for the wolves and in early July two were captured. One, already missing a foot, was sent to a Minnesota research facility. The other, an adult male, was fitted with a radio collar in hopes that he would lead the animal damage control agents to the rest of the pack. After more livestock deaths and more attempts to catch the wolves had failed, including the firing of nets and tranquilizers from helicopters, "the decision was made to take all the animals," says Rightmire. Among these were three pups that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service had originally planned to relocate.

The radio-tracked wolf became "too expensive to keep alive," says Rightmire. Animal damage control agents realized that he wasn't bringing any of the other wolves into the open, and "the federal trapper discovered him one day looking like he just came out of a butcher's shop," he adds. Three dead yearling calves were discovered nearby. The bloody wolf was shot not far from the cattle it had attacked.

Then an adult female wolf

was trapped and died before she was found. Another wolf, a pup, was captured and sent to Minnesota. One female pup was discovered with her foot insecurely held in a trap.

"She was struggling," says Rightmire, "and since the trapper couldn't tell whether she was an adult or not -- plus once a wolf is trapped it's nearly impossible to recapture it -- he decided to kill her." The third pup, a large male weighing within three pounds of the adult female, was shot from a helicopter. Again, the trapper had been unable to tell whether the animal was a pup or an adult, so it was killed. Most of the wolves were killed within a mile or so of the "rendezvous" site, or summer gathering spot.

The livestock industry was quick to capitalize on these wolf depredations as an example of the threat wolves pose to ranchers. It also continued lobbying to block wolves coming back to Yellowstone. Under the reintroduction plan recently approved by the Fish and Wildlife Service, a minimum of 10 pairs of wolves would be released in Yellowstone as an "experimental population."

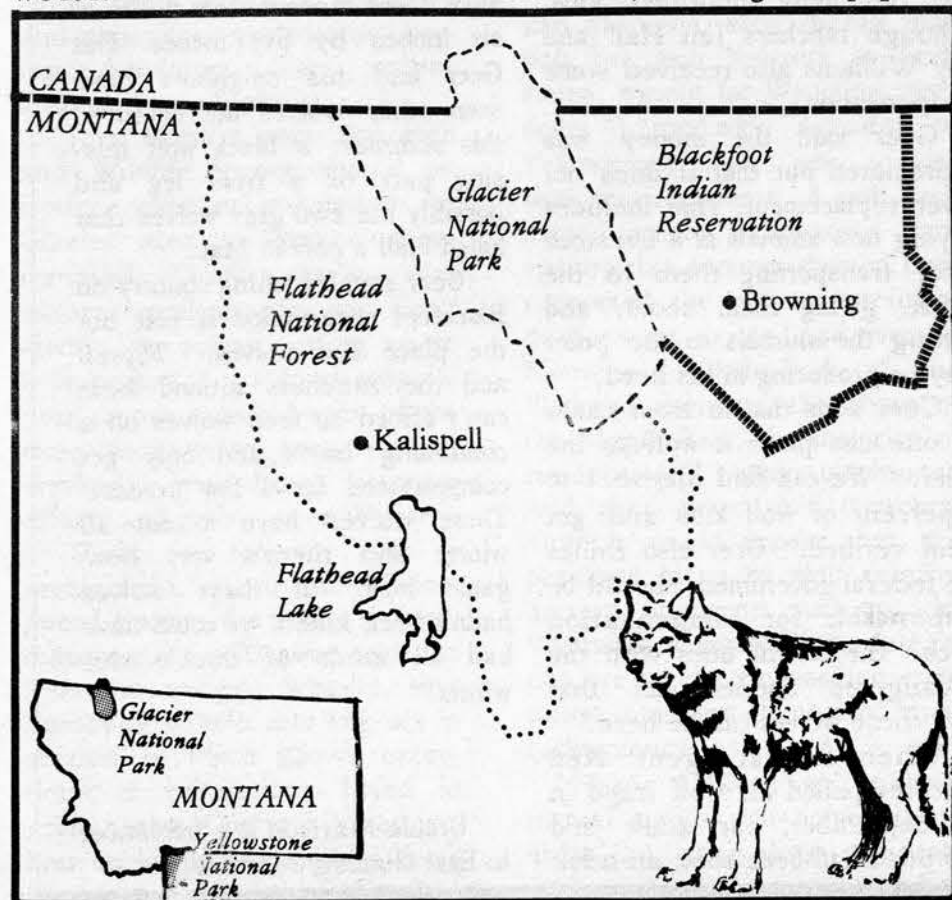
The experimental status of the animals was key to the plan because it allows the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to treat these particular wolves as "threatened," a less restrictive classification than "endangered." The greater management flexibility engendered by the designation includes the ability to kill wolves that wander into areas where they pose a threat to livestock.

In addition, under the rules outlined in the reintroduction plan, ranchers are eligible for money from the government for any documented wolf predation losses. That was not true in Montana where no plan was in effect.

Despite these assurances built into the Yellowstone wolf reintroduction plan, livestock organizations and the Wyoming congressional delegation oppose wolf reintroductions anywhere. Reacting to this pressure, director Frank Dunkle of the Fish and Wildlife Service says he opposes wolf reintroduction.

John Spinks, Deputy Regional Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service in Denver, says the agency has decided it needs "additional studies on the Glacier Park wolf packs to learn more about how they influence their prey species, as well as competition with other predators such as grizzly bears, before there can be any further discussion of Yellowstone wolf reintroductions." New studies might take several years, Spinks adds. No money has been allocated for these studies.

Forest Service biologist John



(Continued on page 12)

Wolves...

(Continued from page 11)

Weaver says additional studies are unnecessary. "We already have existing wolf populations in Alberta and elsewhere interacting with essentially the same prey species as found in Yellowstone." Weaver says around Canada's Riding Mountain National Park, "there are ranchers who more or less co-exist with wolves and find predation losses acceptable under a plan similar to the one proposed for Yellowstone."

The wolf attacks on livestock on the east side of Glacier Park were somewhat unusual. There isn't much prey in the area because the Blackfeet Indian Reservation allows unrestricted year-round hunting. At the same time, biologists say there is a good elk herd that remains primarily in the park most of the year, and that it provides an opportunity for predation on wild game.

In contrast, wolves in the North Fork of the Flathead drainage along Glacier's western border have never preyed upon livestock. But the opportunity for

preying on domestic animals is limited since there is only one cattle ranch in the valley.

A better example of the relatively minor impact wolves have on domestic livestock where sufficient wild prey is available may be in Minnesota.

Over 1,200 wolves co-exist relatively peaceably amidst 9,800 farms that raise 91,000 sheep and 234,000 head of cattle; less than one-fifth of one percent of these farms suffer any livestock losses attributable to wolf predation in a given year. Recent annual compensation payments to Minnesota farmers have averaged \$18,100.

In Montana, where there are essentially no wolves, the Montana Sheep Growers Association claims 1986 losses of over 30,500 head to coyotes, a loss of \$1.4 million. By comparison wolf depredations should be less frequent because wolves would be limited to specific recovery zones. Any that wandered beyond these predetermined bounds would be removed one way or another. In addition, based on the experience of ranchers in regions where wolves and livestock do intermingle, losses from wolf predation are likely to be small. The total cost of having wolves back

Looking at wolves from a Montana rancher's point of view

by Ursula Mattson

Five miles south of Canada in Montana, the Geer ranch sits with its back to the willow-choked South Fork of the Milk River. Grassland rolls and dips across the horizon to the Blackfeet Indian Reservation, and to the west the Rocky Mountains chew the skyline with sharp-toothed peaks.

This uncluttered land of few fences and fewer roads is where Dan Geer, his wife Patty and a hired hand were rotating shifts when I drove the 16 miles from Browning, the nearest town, to the ranch. Driving a combine, grain truck or minding a two-year-old and baby, the trio planned to work into the night to get wheat in before a shower.

This is also the country where a wolf pack from Canada dened last spring, whelped at least three pups, and then were caught killing cows and sheep.

The rancher with the greatest number of confirmed losses was Dan Geer: 10 sheep, three cows. Geer has been a combination farmer-rancher for 13 years, and before this fall says he never lost an animal to wolves -- at least that he knows about. "Beyond any doubt," he adds, "ranchers have been losing livestock for two to three years around here, but have been at a loss to prove it."

It was a year and a half ago that Geer says he first saw a wolf. It was sitting in his driveway. His wife Patty says it made her nervous this year to see so many wolf tracks in the sand near their yard where their young son plays.

This May, the Geers were in a lot of newspaper stories after it was confirmed that a wolf killed a 900-pound cow on the couple's ranch. Then in early August, the Geers lost nine sheep and a lamb to wolves that found easy prey in a corral close to the house.

Two weeks later, the couple rode trail bikes to check their cattle. From federal tracking data on one radio-collared wolf, they knew the animal was probably east of their ranch and close to a

Patty Geer



Rancher Dan Geer holds up leg of a still-living cow eaten by wolves

neighbor's sheep. What they found was a dead yearling with another barely alive -- its hind-quarters were ripped open and eaten.

That day the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Denver decided to kill the depredating wolves. In the evening, the radio-collared wolf returned and killed a third yearling. The wolf was shot the next day.

But who would cover the ranchers' losses? Federal law makes no provision for compensating people for damage done by endangered animals. One solution was private. In September, the private conservation group, Defenders of Wildlife, said it would become involved. The Washington, D.C.-based group then raised more than \$3,000.

Hank Fischer, a Defenders representative in Missoula, Mont., said, "We don't think it's reasonable to expect livestock producers to bear the economic burden. That's what leads to

hatred of the animal which in turn leads to illegal killing."

Most of the money Defenders raised went to the Geers, who had the most confirmed kills, although ranchers Jim Hall and Roy Williams also received some compensation.

Geer said the money was appreciated but that it does not cover replacement. That includes buying new animals at a livestock yard, transporting them to the ranch, giving them shots, and getting the animals to the point they're producing in his herd.

Geer adds that in most cases no one can prove a wolf is the killer. "We can find maybe 1 to 2 percent of wolf kills and get them verified." Geer also thinks the federal government should be responsible for compensation since "they're the ones with the Endangered Species Act that says these wolves can be here."

When federal agent Ken Wheeler pulled his wolf traps in mid-September, one adult and two pups had been shot, an adult

female died in a trap of unknown causes, one pup was sent to Minnesota, and one very large grey wolf from the pack remained alive. Geer measured its tracks at six inches by five inches. But Geer and his neighbors have seen other wolves not captured this summer: a black wolf missing part of a front leg and possibly the two grey wolves that killed Hall's cow in May.

Geer says ranching country on Blackfeet reservation is just not the place for wolves. "Myself and the ranchers around here can't afford to feed wolves on a continuing basis and only get compensated for a few percent. These wolves have to eat all winter and there's very little game here. If these wolves hadn't been killed, we could have had all kinds of trouble this winter."

□

Ursula Mattson is a freelancer in East Glacier, Montana.

in the state would be a relatively minor expense to the livestock industry as a whole, and with adequate compensation, no more than a paperwork headache for individual ranchers.

“Wolf control near Browning on the park's east side was unfortunately necessary since they had become habituated to killing and eating domestic animals instead of wild game,” says Defenders of Wildlife representative Hank Fischer.

“The entire affair was a fiasco from the beginning. The federal officials attempting to capture the wolves were inexperienced, and the wolves definitely suffered because of it,” says Fischer.

Since there is presently no federal compensation program in effect anywhere, Fischer says Defenders of Wildlife paid \$3,147 to ranchers in Montana to compensate them for their losses.

The federal government spent more than \$41,000 to capture or kill the rogue wolves, causing one observer to suggest it would be far cheaper for the federal government to pay ranchers to grow sheep to feed wolves than to attempt any animal control.

Howie Wolke, an outfitter and co-founder of Earth First!, says the Fish and Wildlife Service could have made a greater effort at live-trapping the livestock-raiding wolves, and then relocating them in a place like the wilderness of central Idaho where they'd only have wild prey to feed on.

“It makes me angry to think that my tax dollars are used to kill wolves,” says Wolke. “If taxpayers are asked to pay for predator control -- especially predator control which occurs on public lands -- I feel ranchers should have to pay predator supporters like myself some compensation for the loss of each animal destroyed. Ranchers are depriving me and other public lands users from the pleasure and experience gained from having predators like wolves around,” says Wolke.

John Weaver says the Fish and Wildlife Service should introduce additional wolves into the Glacier area to replace those removed. “Unfortunately, with natural recolonization you don't always get wolves settling where it is proper. Yet a small population cannot sustain losses of the magnitude we've seen without seriously jeopardizing recovery efforts and goals,” says Weaver.

Without a recovery plan to recommend action, the Endangered Species Act is the government's guide on dealing with the Montana wolves. Weaver says flexibility is built into the act in section 10 which allows exceptions to prohibitions listed in section nine. One prohibition is a ban on killing any species listed as endangered *except* if human

Idaho wolf-kill bill has unintended effect

Patricia Burke is a former medical transcriptionist who believes the wolf has a right to its home in the West. To help bring the species back, she founded the Wolf Recovery Foundation, Inc., in Boise, Idaho, June 1986.

Burke's involvement began after seeing the ambitious exhibit, “Wolf and Human: Co-existence, Competition and Conflict,” when it traveled to Yellowstone National Park in 1985. Months later, when an Idaho state legislator introduced a bill to legalize killing wolves, an activist was born.

“I was appalled,” says Burke, who is 48 and a grandmother. Her first attempt to change people's perceptions of wolves was to put together a slide show with the help of the Idaho Department of Fish and Wildlife. She then showed it to groups of school children, and



Patricia Burke

when she added t-shirts that said, “Support Idaho Wolf Recovery,” she also went from being in the red to being in the black.

“The t-shirts really started making money and I didn't know what to do with it,” Burke says.

“I didn't want it (the money), so I started the foundation.” Members of the foundation talk about wolves to any group interested -- even area ranchers.

Burke also quit her job at a cardiac clinic to devote all her time to the foundation. “I expected to run into controversy, but we have been very, very well received.” The non-profit foundation now has 105 members in 24 states.

Recently, Patricia Burke decided to leave the group she founded to move to Spokane, Wash. There she plans to speak out more politically about the need for wolf recovery in the West.

Linda Fraise of Boise continues the work of the foundation as its director; the Wolf Recovery Foundation, Inc., is at P.O. Box 793, Boise, Idaho 83701.

--Diane Hackl

life is threatened. According to the Fish and Wildlife Service's John Spinks, wolves preying upon livestock near Glacier had to be destroyed because failure to do so might have created insurmountable political opposition and thus jeopardize the wolf's long-term recovery.

The political opposition Spinks refers to comes primarily from just one small segment of society, the livestock industry. Hank Fischer points out that, “Throughout the U.S. as a whole there is overwhelming support for wolf recovery and reintroductions. Even opinion polls conducted closer to areas where wolves might actually dwell shows a majority of the people favoring wolf recovery.”

These polls, conducted during the past year in both Wyoming and Montana, show overall support for wolf recovery in both states, except for Wyoming residents immediately adjacent to Yellowstone Park, who oppose wolf reintroductions. A poll conducted among Yellowstone Park visitors this summer showed they supported the proposed reintroductions six to one. And even in Montana's North Fork of the Flathead drainage, the home of the Magic Pack, the majority of residents and hunters questioned said they favor wolf recovery. Thus it would appear that the positions taken by wolf reintroduction opponents such as the Wyoming congressional delegation are in direct opposition even to the opinions of most of their constituency.

Jasper Carlton, an environmental activist who helped bring about the listing of the mountain caribou in Idaho as an endan-

gered species, points out that opposition to wolf recovery and reintroduction from Western political leaders does not reflect the wishes of the people of this nation.

“After all, they represent one of the smallest constituencies in the country,” he says. “It's ridiculous that the Wyoming delegation and Frank Dunkle can stop reintroduction efforts. The Endangered Species Act does not direct the Fish and Wildlife Service to recover only those

species for which it is politically expedient.

“On the contrary, the act explicitly requires the government to bring about the recovery of every listed species and has a legally defined process by which that is to occur.” It is a process which Carlton claims the Wyoming delegation has “illegally halted.”

John Weaver echoes Carlton's sentiments. He says, “Wolf recovery is a national issue and

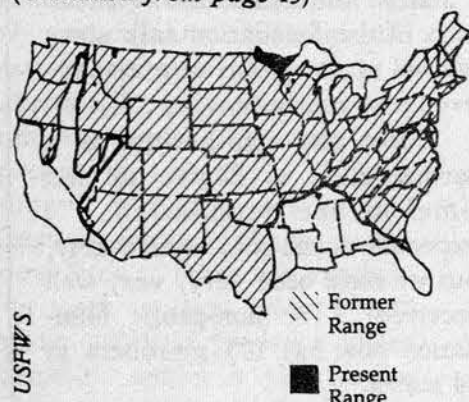
(Continued on page 14)

‘It makes me angry to think that my tax dollars are used to kill wolves.’



Wolves...

(Continued from page 13)



The wolf in America: All wolves in the lower 48 states were listed as endangered in 1978 with the exception of Minnesota, where they were listed as threatened.

deserves a national discussion. That public involvement would occur in the environmental impact statement process. The wolf reintroduction plan was approved and now the next step is for the Park Service to do an EIS as required by law."

Howie Wolke, frustrated by what he says is "obvious political maneuvering by the Wyoming delegation," has suggested that private citizens might have to reintroduce wolves into Yellowstone and elsewhere if the Fish and Wildlife Service reneges upon its legal duty to bring about total recovery. In spite of these warlike words, Wolke says "I'd rather have the government do it since they are in a better position to make (it) successful."

Wolke may not have to wait that long for the government to act. On Sept. 30, Rep. Wayne Owens, D-Utah, introduced a bill mandating implementation of the wolf recovery plan. This would include preparation of an EIS on the Yellowstone reintroductions, and

Gerald Silber



Rep. Wayne Owens, left, meets a wolf at the Wasatch Wildlife Ranch of Doug Seus, right

barring unforeseen complications, would lead to the planting of wolves in the park within three years of the bill's passage. Already the bill has generated great excitement and hope in the conservation community, and Owens' office has received "an overwhelming positive response," according to aide Matt Derham. Derham says they have gotten only two or three negative letters on the bill.

Owens' bill was born out of a frustration with the Wyoming delegation's stalling tactics, and a personal attachment to Yellowstone, he says. Owens has been a long-time visitor to the park and participant in classes at the Yellowstone Institute, a non-profit educational group. He decided this summer after a meeting with park officials that although the park needed wolves, it wouldn't restore them unless

some positive action was taken to counter the vocal opposition.

Aide Derham reports that the Wyoming delegation's reaction to the bill was not as vociferous as expected and Wyoming Sen. Alan Simpson, R, is willing to debate the issue in Congress. Rep. Dick Cheney, R-Wyo., however, is reportedly less than enthusiastic and promises to fight the legislation. Hearings will probably not be held until 1988.

In spite of the setback, many observers remain optimistic. Says Fairchild, "Recovery was slowed, but not squelched. Wolves are, after all, prolific breeders; and given a few years of total protection, they may be able to recover all the losses which occurred this past year."

Hank Fischer observes, "Despite the regrettable loss of wolves up by Glacier this past year, we've had more positive

activity and progress towards wolf recovery than in the last 13 years, and public awareness is at a greater level than ever. As long as we're making consistent progress, I have reason to feel optimistic."

For the Ghost Dancers who died at Wounded Knee, the dream of bringing back their way of life was never realized. But for those who long to hear wolf howls echoing down the spine of the Rockies, or who hope to find wolf tracks impressed in the wet sand along the Yellowstone, the dream appears to have a much better chance of becoming reality.

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George Wuerthner and Mollie Matteson live and work as freelancers in Livingston, Montana.

Sheepman says environmentalists are killing his industry

CASPER, Wyo. -- Despite record prices for lamb, his industry is losing too many battles, says the retiring president of the Wyoming Wool Growers Association.

President Lee Coffman lashed out at rustlers, wildlife regulations, credit problems, lions, taxes, and foreign competition that he says threaten the survival of the industry in Wyoming.

Coffman, who recently sold his outfit and announced he was leaving the business his family has been in for nearly 100 years, says his peers are pawns of wildlife groups "who want to make a national park out of the state of Wyoming." He called reintroducing wolves in Yellowstone "ludicrous" and proof that they want to do away with the livestock industry.

"In my opinion, they smell blood," says Coffman. "The economic downturn in agriculture really fired them up and, man, they can see...where they can really get us."

"They've had their goddamn boot heel in our neck now for the last 10 years and they do not let up, and I don't think you'll have an economic base in Wyoming that can support the schools or cities or hospitals. But I don't think they give a shit. I don't think they really care," Coffman says.

Ranchers have a difficult time proving their lion losses to justify compensation from the state Game and Fish Department, Coffman said, because the lions frequently hide their kills. "Those ranchers have a legitimate claim against the Game and

Fish," he said.

And human predators, attracted by high prices, are costing sheepmen. Rustling, said Coffman, is "very profitable -- when you're talking about rustling, nobody sends you a 1099" tax form.

"With these prices, the rustling has again gotten out of control," he said. "Some people have been forced to hire their own range detectives," including controversial former lawman Ed Cantrell, because government agencies can do so little to stop the problem, he said.

Most woolgrowers are making money this year on account of record high prices for lambs, Coffman said. But that good news has been offset by the demise of federal income tax averaging, which would have

allowed this year's profits to be apportioned to previous, poorer years.

The woolgrowers' next challenge may come from New Zealand, he said. The New Zealanders have a glut of lambs and intend to ship them to the U.S. for feeding via Oregon, Coffman said.

Coffman said he is now going to go to Australia and New Zealand with his wife and "thank all of the people who put me out of business, starting with (Wyoming Wildlife Federation official) Matt Reid, (National Wildlife Federation official) Tom Doherty, and your (Star-Tribune reporter and columnist Andrew Melnykovich)..."

--Matt Winters
Casper Star-Tribune

LETTERS



Priscilla Marden, Teton Science School

NO CRUELER THAN FROGS

Dear HCN,

Mike Harrop's gory depiction of the way wolves sometimes dispatch their prey (HCN, 10/26/87) made me wonder if he hasn't progressed beyond the Jack London epoch. That wolves sometimes seem "cruel" (by whose standards?) in obtaining their food is totally irrelevant to the question of their being allowed to survive in the wild.

Harrop should know that frogs, pelicans, dolphins, etc., swallow their prey live, to slowly die in their digestive juices. Does that make them bad? And what of that great "civilized" predator, man, who through history has devised countless means to torture and slowly kill (or not) other creatures - including his own species. Given the shameful record of brutality by *homo sapiens*, who among us has the right to criticize the way so-called "lower" animals get their food?

We have the ability to wipe out anything we don't like or understand in our moment in history. Those whom we would destroy can't consciously plan for the future; we can, and as stewards of our lands and wildlife, there's room for much improvement in our attitudes and actions.

David Berner, M.D.
Condon, Montana

FOR WOLF
REINTRODUCTION

Dear HCN,

The hysteria of the stockgrowers, whether intentional or out of misinformation or lack of knowledge, was made very obvious by Mike Harrop's article in the Oct. 26 issue of *High Country News*. Massive doses of innuendos, incorrect facts, blatant distortions of the truth and outright falsehoods -- I am sure, all sincerely believed -- show why public education based on scientific fact, not emotion, is absolutely necessary if wolf recovery is to become a reality.

Yes, Mr. Harrop, the stockman must be allowed to protect *his property on his property* and the law should be very explicit. He should not, however, have the right to kill wildlife that may kill or threaten his stock when he has moved them 50 to 100 miles into wildlife habitat. We have good grass in a well protected pasture at \$8/AMU or we have lessor grass in an area that contains

predators at \$1.35/AMU. There is no free lunch. The piddling sum of \$1.35 doesn't give the stockgrower the right to kill anything. We must all abide by the hunting seasons and there is no hunting season on grizzly bears, wolves and eagles. Nowhere in our Constitution do I find any special exemption for ranchers or woolgrowers, or any special interest groups, for that matter.

Distortions of the truth are not considered good journalism, according to my understanding, Mr. Harrop. I hope this is not the way your newspaper is run. "The recent death of the Wolf Recovery Project" does *not* exist. The Wolf Recovery Plan was signed August 3, 1987, by John Spinks, Region 6 office of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service in Denver, Colo. That doesn't sound dead to me.

There was never any intention in the plan to reintroduce wolves into Yellowstone upon signing. The plan is strictly that -- a plan. It says, if and when we do reintroduce wolves, this is how we intend to do it.

Mr. Harrop states, "Wolves don't kill with the dispassion, accuracy and painlessness of a bullet," suggesting that hunters are master marksmen.

With the continual killing of wolves in Canada and Alaska, we might soon find North America devoid not only of the wolf, but also the moose, caribou, deer and elk. We can't eliminate just one species and not feel its effect. Killing off just one species may very well lead to the extinction of many more species.

This is not just a problem with whether to have wolves or not to have wolves. This is an attitude which must be changed by man. Every creature on this planet fits into the greater scheme of things and man must learn to live with predator and prey; or man himself might find he has gone too far and that it is too late to turn things around.

In 1985, Yellowstone hosted 215,000 visitors at the Science Museum of Minnesota's Wolves and Humans exhibit at Grant Village Visitor Center. That summer, David A. McNaught of the University of Montana asked 1,083 park visitors about their attitudes toward wolf recovery. He wrote, "a large majority of park visitors would favor a return of wolves to Yellowstone."

During the content analysis of the comments on the Northern Rocky Wolf Recovery Plan, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service noted that an overwhelming majority of the respondents (85 percent) supported and favored the recovery plan.

Alistair Bath of the University of Wyoming conducted a statewide survey of the general public and found 48.5 percent in favor of wolf reintroduction, 34.5 percent against, and 17 percent with no opinion. He stated that, "Younger, better-educated respondents who knew more about wolves favored reintroduction, while those against reintroduction were typically older, rural, less educated and less informed about wolves."

In conclusion, we must keep in mind that Yellowstone National Park belongs to everyone in the United States and whether wolves should or should not be in that ecosystem cannot be dictated by the state governments of Idaho, Montana or Wyoming.

Ron McFarland
Durango, Colorado

ONE HELLUVA ANIMAL!

Dear HCN,

Reading about the wolf issue in HCN recently, I somehow wish that Barry Lopez would write a new book called *Of Wolves and Bureaucrats*. By my definition, a bureaucrat is someone who works for an agency but forgot what he was hired for, and a bureaucracy is an agency that has come to put politics and survival above the resource for which it is responsible.

Certain Yellowstone wolf "advocates" and a few wolf "biologists" are as balmy about recovery of the Yellowstone wolf as were some of the 1970s advocates of the grizzly bear. Face it, my potential friends, left on their own wolves are a super-efficient predator that can outwit any ungulate; any game warden or federal agent stripped of his 1080, strychnine and cyanide; and you. Wolves are one helluva animal! Learn your wolves first! Then come back to the Yellowstone and start your arguments.

What I see happening in the Yellowstone area is another "Yellowstone Controversy" in the making, but this time focused on wolves. And I don't like it. The previous (and continuing) controversy over Yellowstone bears hurts bears, bear habitat and bear biologists throughout the northern hemisphere. It still consumes millions of "bear" dollars each year on idiot ideas, while the real bear problems are elsewhere in the world.

The beginning wolf imbroglio is already hurting the northern Montana wolf pack, and is affecting wolf management in British Columbia. If wolves are introduced into the Yellowstone ecosystem under present circumstances, wolves will die on three continents, functional wolf management plans will be scrapped and a lot more good biologists will be made to look like clowns.

Given time, of course, wolves could once more learn how to live in the Yellowstone area, and they could *learn to live with* Yellowstone-area people (anyone from tourists to ranchers). But they won't be given that time. Consider, for a moment, how much time the National Park Service is giving grizzlies to learn to use natural ecocenters, or how much time the Blackfeet wolves were given to "learn how to live with people." Not even six months, that's how long.

Wolves may need as long as 20 years to learn how to live in a new area occupied by people. And certainly our wolves are as smart as Polish wolves; 40 million people and 100 wolves live in Poland, an area the size of Montana. But Poles and Polish wolves evolved slowly, and together, in less hurried times when poisons, D-8 cats and grazing leases were not yet invented.

In order for us and wolves to get where the Poles and Polish wolves are in wolf/people relationships, Yellowstone people have to learn how to live with wolves (an impossible task?), and the wolves have to learn how to live with people (several generations of wolves?). Perhaps we can't. Maybe Polish wolves and Polish people are just lots smarter than we are. One thing is certain, though, we won't get where the Poles are by pounding one another on the head, or by cutting political deals.

Montana/Wyoming wolves could, I think, re-learn to live with people, with ranchers. Just like bears, wolves want each day mainly (1) to stay alive (e.g., not get into trouble with people or anything else), and (2) to get enough calories (Funny thing, you might say, they are just like other animals!). Wolves are *very* clever at both of those tasks (staying alive and getting calories), and people could help them out at both. But do we? No.

Consider again the Blackfeet wolves. Perhaps \$100,000 was spent (*all* costs considered) killing the 1986-87 Blackfeet Pack, even though the Wolf Recovery Plan calls for more wolves. Successfully reintroducing wolves into that same area could cost perhaps several million dollars and the time necessary for wolves to learn how to live in East Front or Blackfeet country. In the 1986-87 Blackfeet case, however, we had a wolf pack that had already followed the Recovery Plan *free of charge*! They were successful all on their own, except for the one thing -- they didn't know yet that wolves shouldn't eat cows and sheep.

Plain, simple, and cheap, wolves can learn to leave livestock alone, especially with some "aversive conditioning" from the rancher. The ranchers, too, can learn how to run stock so that they minimize losses. For example, a rancher can run bear and wolf "bait" out on the range, or he can herd his livestock as if there were wolves and bears left in the world. Give the wolves a chance to learn, don't "bait" them, and give to them a decade or two, and they probably would have solved that last problem. Most importantly, managers could have helped them to learn to avoid livestock, and it could probably have been done just as quickly as it took to kill the Blackfeet pack, and at about the same or less cost.

In conclusion, know several things, Yellowstone wolfies: Don't ever underestimate a wolf pack, and don't ever underestimate the power of ranchers. Wolf and coyote packs are like "swat teams," super-good at what they do. They are like the Israeli team that hit Entebbe. Ranchers, on the other hand, are almost like separate countries. They own vast tracts of land over which each rancher is the president, Supreme Court and Congress. Moreover, many ranchers have watched over their land for half a century or more, and they know their land. They also carry far more power than one vote, don't like to make quick changes and don't like outsiders. You can push a rancher into something about as easily as you can push around a rhino or killer whale.

The re-introduction of wolves into Yellowstone National Park right now is about as futile as aiding the contras in Nicaragua. We need the "magic pack" in the Glacier National Park area, but please give us time to learn how to live with those wolves first. When the wolves learn how to live with Blackfeet ranchers, and when the people of northwestern Montana accept wolves as the amazing asset they are, then let's talk Yellowstone. And everyone hope that the federal government discovers aversive conditioning one of these days.

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Cancer strikes indirectly at the slow-growing yew

by Jim Stiak

With the discovery that it may help cure cancer, a long-ignored tree has become the center of a lively debate in the Pacific Northwest.

The yew, a slow-growing, long-lived, amber-timbered evergreen, contains taxol, a drug found effective against some forms of cancer. With an order for 60,000 pounds of air-dried Pacific yew bark, the National Cancer Institute has transformed the humble tree from a forester's weed into a valuable plant. And that may spell trouble for the yew.

"Our forests can only take that abuse once in a lifetime," says Jerry Rust, a commissioner in Lane County, Ore., where much of the bark is being gathered. "You can't go back and plant more. Trees one foot in diameter are older than the country. If we're going to have this medicine widely available in the future, it needs to be synthesized."

That may not be easy. It has an extremely complex structure, says Robert Holton of Florida State University, who has been studying taxol since its anti-cancer activity was discovered in 1971. As a result, the molecule is not readily duplicated in the laboratory.

Even extracting taxol from bark is a laborious process that takes nine months, says cancer institute chemist Gordon Cragg. Sixty thousand pounds of bark provides only six pounds of taxol -- enough to treat a few hundred people.

The cancer institute's allocation of a few hundred thousand dollars has sent collectors scrambling for a

piece of the yew-bark pie. Ray Eller, who helped fill the institute's request this summer, says he was contacted by people in Idaho, British Columbia, Washington, Oregon and California, as well as by a couple of firms that want to derive the taxol on their own. Although he believes there's enough yew to collect "60,000 pounds a year for the next 10 years without endangering them," he's disturbed about a side effect -- poaching.

"Fifty acres of standing yews that I know of were stripped this summer," he says.

Jim Wamsley of the Umpqua National Forest's Cottage Grove District agrees it's a problem: "As a wild guess," he says, "I'd say there were 600 trees stripped this summer, with as much as 16,000 pounds of bark taken."

The Forest Service issues permits to yew-bark pickers, in essence selling them the trees at a per board-foot price. Some people are circumventing the process, Wamsley realizes, but catching them is difficult. Besides, the maximum fine for a first-time offender is \$100, a penalty Eller calls "hardly a slap on the wrist" when an average picker can make \$150 a day.

This is not the first time the yew, which grows in northern temperate regions around the world, has been the center of attention. In the English Isles, the Druids founded many of their sacred sites around yews. They believed that the roots of the tree reached into the mouths of the dead buried beneath, whose secrets could then be heard in the whispering branches. The early Christians found it easy to attract people to those sites and built their churches there. Yews can still be

seen in many English churchyards.

According to Hal Hartzell, Jr., co-author, with Rust, of *The Yew Book*, the tree's hardwood was the favorite of bow-makers from many cultures. Pacific Northwest Indians used it not only for bows but also for bowls, mauls, wedges, combs and halibut hooks. They also crushed the needles for use in astringent baths, pulverized them into a paste for wounds and made tea from the bark for respiratory ailments.

But loggers have long considered yews useless, and have left them suffering under the naked sun in the middle of clear-cuts. Its primary commercial use has been for fence-posts since they are virtually impervious to rot, even in the moist Northwest. The Japanese began buying yew logs in the 1970s for architectural purposes but found it gnarly, and the market dropped off. More recently, yews have been shipped to Germany, where they are used to repair and replicate antique furniture or are turned into a veneer that finishes to a rich amber sheen.

A favored forage for deer and elk, its dense dark growth makes it popular among landscapers, and modern botanists have developed hundreds of varieties. But only one variety, *taxus brevifolia*, the Pacific yew, contains enough taxol for the National Cancer Institute. On mountain slopes from Northern California to Alaska, Pacific yew thrives in the shade of fir and hemlocks. Its aversion to sun helps make it slow-growing -- the largest Pacific yew on record, 70 feet tall and 17 feet around, is estimated to be over 1,000 years old -- still a mere stripling compared to the Fortingall yew of England, whose branches, legend has it, were already that old

when Pontius Pilate was born under them.

To get at the taxol, the yews are felled and the bark stripped with knives, air-dried for several days, stuffed in burlap bags and then trucked across country to the cancer institute's Bethesda, Maryland, headquarters. From one medium-sized tree, which could be 200 years old, some 20 pounds of fresh bark can be collected, drying down to about half that weight. Extrapolating from those figures, the current contract could mean the end of several thousand yews.

The National Cancer Institute is reluctant to say what kinds of cancer taxol is being used to treat, but other researchers have reported that leukemia as well as colon, lung and mammary tumors are susceptible to the drug.

"It's only in the clinical trial stage," says Cragg, "and we don't want to give people false hope."

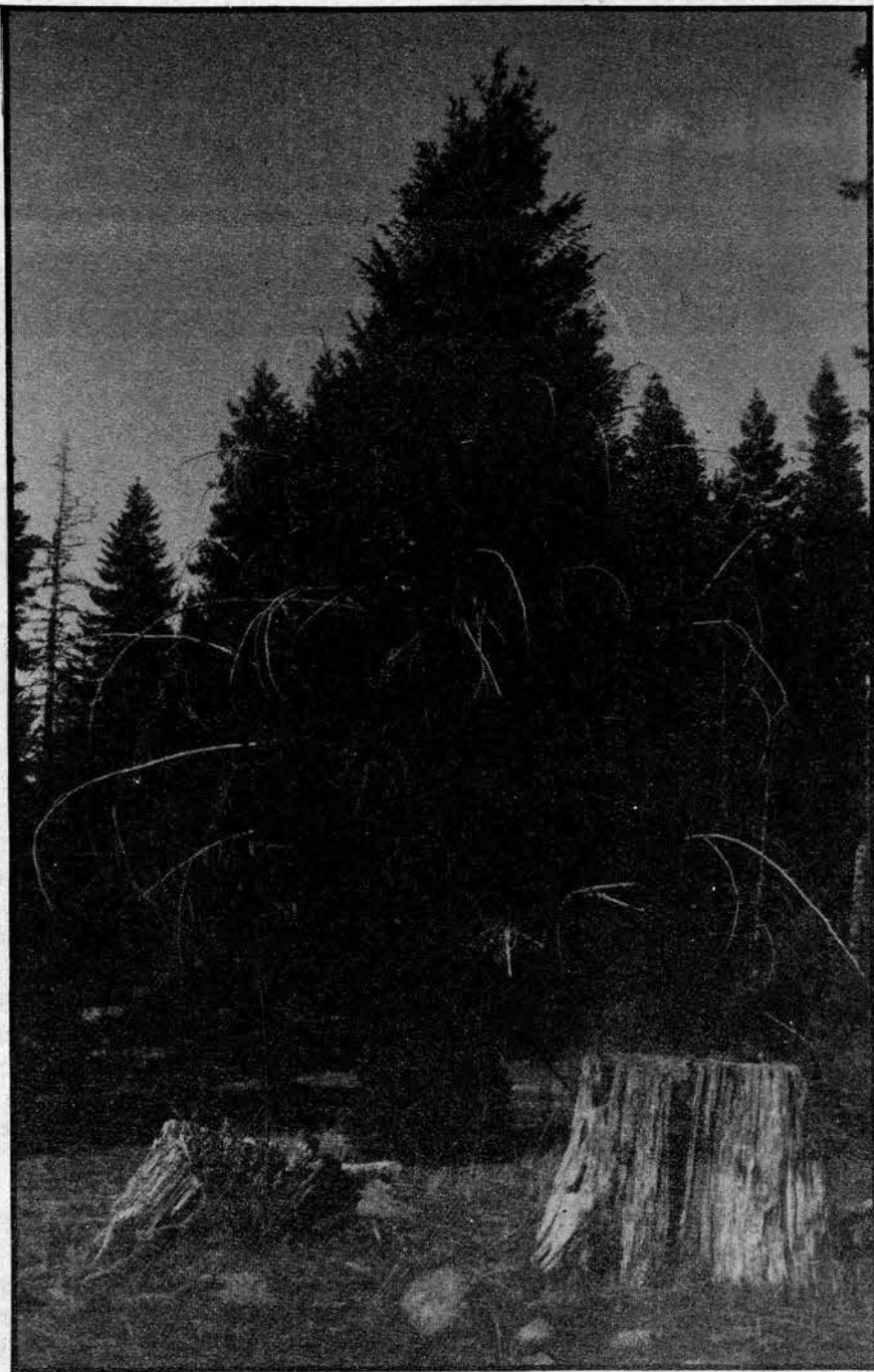
The cancer institute is conscious of the environmental impact of these clinical trials, he says, and realizes that other sources will have to be found if taxol delivers on its early promises.

"I don't want to cut all the yews," says Eller. "But if I knew someone who had cancer and a yew would save them, you bet I'd cut down a whole hillside. A tree is not worth a person's life."

Others, however, question such wholesale harvesting. "In order to get the golden egg," observes Hartzell, "you've got to kill the goose."

Jim Stiak is a freelance writer in Eugene, Oregon.

Jim Stiak



Yew